■ News/A4
Little stories seen and heard in the street of protest

■ News/A3
Erap's 'Senior' calls for setting up caretaker gov't

■ News/A4
Noli says he decided to stick with GMA to avoid chaos

■ Metro/A23
FPJ leader on way to rally dies in motorcycle-van collision

■ Sports/A27
Lance leaves lasting legacy with 7th title

Drilon: 2nd most-watched person at the Batasan

By Veit Consorsa

MANILA, PHILIPPINES — Senate President Franklin Drilon, glued to you-know-who's State of the Nation Address, couldn't help himself and "pinched" the cheeks of

(FULL STORY, A-12)

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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GMA brings House down: 5 ovations, 33 applause

By Julie Lobo Quintos

THE RECEPTION of government-invited guests to President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address yesterday was as impressive as that delivered a year.

Thirty-three rounds of applause, with five standing ovations, greeted Ms. Arroyo's

(FULL STORY, A-12)

GMA high on Cha-cha

But she's silent on 'Gloriagate,' political crisis

By Christine O. Avendaño

IT WAS her State of the Nation Address, but President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday made no mention of the political crisis that has gripped the country for more than a month now.

Instead, she sounded the call for Charter change, and pledged to push ahead with her economic and fiscal reforms as "whatever politicians."

She said the country was able to achieve economic growth of more than 6 percent last year and to generate four million jobs in the last four years even amid the recession in global prices.

But while Ms Arroyo urged action on the constitutional change espoused by her chief allies—Speaker Jose de Venecia and former President Fidel Ramos—she was silent on the issue. She merely said it should be done, and "the sooner, the better."

She also went as far as to state her preference for a constituent assembly to tackle the amendments, as well as for a shift from the presidential system to a parliamentary-federal form of government.

"It's time to start the great debate on charter change," the President said in the much-awaited speech described as the shortest she had ever delivered in her four years in office.

(FULL STORY, A-12)

IN THE MOOD for jubilation, chat is President Arroyo and House Speaker Jose de Venecia are. But not quite Senate President Franklin Drilon. (More pictures on Page A21.)

TOGETHER, of course. The President with daughter Luli, trained as her secret weapon in the battle for the hearts and minds of the people.

Only 42 file impeach case, others under wraps

By Michael Lim Ubac

UNABLE to save her through street protests, opponents of President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday took their battle to the legal arena.

Forty-two lawmakers of various political stripes filed an amended impeachment case in the House of Representatives, accusing Ms Arroyo of cheating and bribing her way to victory in the 2004 election, benefiting from gambling payoffs, hiding real estate properties in the United States and complicity in the murder of political documents. (See specifics of the complaint on Page A6.)

"If the President becomes a lameduck, she loses coverage for the law," they said in their complaint. "She invites every person to become a law unto herself, the lawless anarchy."

The 42 who finally endorsed the complaint came from different parties but their number was woefully short of the 79 signatures—or two-thirds of the total House membership—needed to propel the case straight to the Senate for trial.

On the eve of the filing, some opposition legislators had trumpeted they had secured the commitment of at least 97 House members, or just 12 short of the "Magic 79."

Rep. Erlinda Antonino-Custodio confirmed that the minority had won the commitment of 47 lawmakers, as reported by the heavens, but said their identities would be kept under wraps until all 79 required signatures had been gathered.

"We have to protect their names right now so that the majority will not harass them," Custodio said. "In one to two weeks, we will be able to gather 90 to a hundred signatures."

Ms Arroyo thus became the second in

(FULL STORY, A-6)

Protest rained out across the nation

By PDI Bureaus

OPPOSITION rages to rancor President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address (Sona) yesterday did not happen at the capital, but real Armageddon unleashed protestors before they could assemble in the Plaza on Mendiola.

Crowd estimates ranged from a few hundred to several thousand. (See photos in demo the Nation, Pages A14 and A29.)

In Iloilo City, several 3,000 antidownhill protestors marched from two assembly points before converging at the Iloilo City Hall Esplanade.

Umbrellas mixed with a sea of placards and streamers as the protestors rallied the President "Gloi" (probe) for clinging to power.

Activists danced to the hit "Hello Carol" tune. They also lambasted "Bil," referring to their fellow Ilonggo Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez whom they called a "dai" (fraud) for his controversial stance against those calling on the President to resign, including former President Corazon Aquino and her daughter, Kris Aquino.

Fellow locally favoured a banner for

(FULL STORY, A-14)

Opposition mounts biggest rally yet

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr., Blanche S. Rivera and Norman Bordadora

IT WAS the biggest rally against President Macapagal-Arroyo so far.

Organizers placed at 80,000 the number of people who joined the protest rally on Commonwealth Avenue about a kilometer from the Batasang Pambansa where Ms Arroyo delivered her State of the Nation Address (Sona).

A police official said only 10,000 attended the demonstration demanding the President's resignation. The organizers placed the figure at 80,000 to 90,000.

Despite the various estimates, both police and organizers of the protest agreed that it was much bigger than the rally on July 11 on Ayala Avenue in Makati City.

The rally was the latest in a series of daily protest actions against Ms Arroyo, stemming from allegations that she cheated in last year's elections when she called an election official to ask how many votes she was declared winner. The President has apologized but

(OPPOSITION, A-2)

IT WAS the largest security force ever assembled for a State of the Nation Address. The anti-Arroyo demonstrators along the stretch of Commonwealth Avenue are kept away from anywhere near the Batasang Pambansa by a clear of policemen, barbed wire, vans, garbage trucks and fire trucks.

Defensor's wife stands out in Sona fashion

By Fe Zamora

DOTS, wrong color.

No matter, Jade Defensor, wife of Interior and Secretary Michael Defensor, stood out in her 3rd Colfred gown. (Photos on Page A18.)

"But I didn't know," Mr. Defensor groaned that pouch was the color adopted by the opposition to denounce their call to "no-pouch" President Macapagal-Arroyo. Defensor's husband just happens to be one of the President's staunchest defenders.

A single pouch rose in a vase was placed on the desk of each opposition congressman. Most of

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

GMA Sona good news to business

Vow to push reforms 'whatever the political cost' to boost markets

Doris C. Bonifacio
and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's vow to continue economic reforms and fiscal discipline "whatever the political cost" during her State of the Nation Address (Sona) yesterday is seen to bring good tidings when financial markets reopen today.

Currency and stock traders said such an assurance, at this time of political turbulence, would cheer the markets, given that the resignation of key economic managers led by then Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima had cast doubts on Mrs Arroyo's ability to make tough decisions.

Also helpful was the lack of disruption in the metropolis' peace and order situation, which hung like a cloud of doubt before markets paused for the long weekend.

Forex on a positive note

"The (foreign exchange) market should open on a positive note since the dust must fly with our command incidents. Also, the effect of the years resolution last Thursday – which should have made the peso appreciate if not for the Sona concerns – may now happen," said Jose Ejercito Estrada Investment Bank analyst on foreign exchange movement in Philippines.

However, he said the peso's upside would still be limited by perception of a pronounced political undertone.

"The improvement process must be out of our way before we could move on," Ejercito said.

Astro del Castillo, president of First Grade Holdings and a director of the Securities Analysts Association of the Philippines, said the commitment to pursue reforms shows despite the political challenges was a big plus for the markets.

"We're satisfied with what we heard but we'll keep an eye on how the initiative mentioned will be pursued," he said.

Del Castillo said the stock market would likely perform well today, helped by the continuation of the years and the rise in shares of blue chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. in New York Friday night.

On the pro-need law

Jonathan Ravelas, chief economist of Banco de Oro Universal Bank, agreed that the president's speech was "acceptable" to the markets, allaying fears that the country might backtrack from fiscal reforms.

"It shows that the president could be part of the solution to the problem and that it's now up to Congress to move on the (fiscal) change," he said.

Ravelas said the stock market would likely perform well today, helped by the continuation of the years and the rise in shares of blue chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. in New York Friday night.

"Personally, I don't think the presidential system is working for us, given the nature of local politics and the struggle within the parties," he said.

"Investors invest in different forms of governments. What is important for them is that we'll do what we said we'll do," Consunji added.

Charter change?

Philippine-US Business Council (fmr) Ramon del Rosario Jr. said the call for Charter change "does not address the issues of leadership and legitimacy."

The first two, he said, was the entrenchment and full implementation of the EASE. The second is the President's pursuit of the corruption against (an almost that former Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno) had effectively implemented with good results, Del Rosario added.

In her Sona, Mrs Arroyo reassured investors of her commitment to rein in the fiscal deficit by collecting more taxes and cutting down on costs to finally turn the Philippines' economic potential into reality.

"With investors both here and abroad in mind, I invite you all to join me in sending them a strong message from this great hall: We will not waver in our commitment to economic reform and fiscal discipline, whatever the political cost," the President said.

Not only is this serious commitment to undertaking the pressing fiscal reforms, she has also made economic matters a key motivation for her proposed to fast-track constitutional change.

"We must address such questions as how much more government is needed for the greater safety and economic security of our people, and how much less government is most conducive to free enterprise and economic progress," the President said.

Titanic struggle

To emphasize her commitment to the EASE and other fiscal reform measures into successful institutional legacy, the President described her lobbying to push this bill in Congress as a "Titanic struggle to enact the three laws that completed the fiscal package in our history, the biggest revenue measure in a generation (at least P120 billion a year) that will break the vicious cycle of financing development by borrowing and having to borrow again just to service those loans."

In her speech, she underscored that in the last three years the economy had been poised for a takeoff – citing the 6% percent economic growth she created – amid the biggest oil price hikes in history.

"Our story on the verge of take-off is real: Analysts need only to look at our stock market and even the peso dollar exchange rate to sense the strong anticipation of significant improvements. If only the naysayers could see what I seem to be our new normal," Mrs Arroyo said.

The President also voiced her concern on the impact of the political crisis on economic growth. "While there is no panicking in macro politics, there can be a deteriorated effect to limit the collateral damage on economy poised for takeoff."

SOLDIERS in armoured personnel carrier guard the Batasang Pambansa compound in Quezon City Monday.

SUPPORTERS of President Macapagal-Arroyo preserve in march toward the Batasang Pambansa to lend support to their beleaguered leader Monday.

Chinese visitors to RP up 150% in first 6 months

By Jerome Aning

CHINA has again proven to be the Philippines' fastest growing source of inbound tourists with a 146.1 percent increase in arrivals in the first half of this year.

According to the Department of Tourism statistics, there were 43,791 tourist arrivals from China between Jan. 1 to June 27 compared to 16,900 who arrived in the same period last year.

DOT Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said China has become one of the country's top sources of foreign travelers, ranking seventh after the United States, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Australia.

"These results are indeed encouraging for us to further intensify our operations in China. Not only that, we are also very optimistic that we will be able to sustain this success with our current cost-effective marketing campaigns," he said.

To keep the numbers up, DOT's China marketing team, headed by Assistant Secretary Ishmael Angeles Jr., has pushed for priority product support here in the country.

The department's promotion efforts focus on a market of about 1.3 million Chinese based around Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, who went to multinational corporations and who are familiar with the Western lifestyle.

The target group is made up of young, single or married, high-spending and city-based professionals who are executive travelers.

Ocean-view driveways, private companies and the government as a source for their performance.

One of the more effective programs was "Meet and Assist" which covers non-English-speaking tourists like the Chinese, Koreans and Japanese. It was recently launched by the GET at international airports in Manila and Cebu.

Also designed for Chinese visitors was the innovative "Visa-Upon-Arrival" program made possible with the cooperation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Bureau of Immigration.

There were also training programs for Mandarin-speaking guides.

In addition to the DOT office in Beijing, a marketing representative based in Shanghai was appointed last July 15.

The DOT is targeting 73,000 Chinese tourists this year, a small fraction of the estimated 30 million Chinese annual outbound tourist, making China the world's largest travel market.

Erap calls for caretaker gov't in Tanay 'Sonia'

ESTRADA: Will he be part of the proposed transition government? —AFP

By Norman Bordadora

FORMER PRESIDENT Joseph Estrada, from his house arrest in Tanay, Rizal, yesterday issued his own version of the state of the nation, assuming President Macapagal-Arroyo of stealing the presidency, causing the suffering of Filipinos and hamstringing reforms and abuse.

In a statement, dubbed the "state of the nation in spite of Arroyo" or Sonia, the deposed Estrada, for the first time, called for the establishment of a caretaker government to be composed of "representatives from various sectors of society" and the institution of a "blueprint for a viable Philippines."

"I call on (the people) to establish a caretaker government that will represent the various sectors of society and will serve honestly and with dignity. Because of the problems faced by the country, not one person can handle the task of governing a fragmented nation," Estrada said.

Estrada's statement was read to the throng of anti-Arroyo protesters on Commonwealth Avenue by his son San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito right after the Arroyo's own State of the Nation Address (Sona) and the opening of Congress.

The protesters rallied for the President to step down and had burned a mixed effigy of the heroes.

Estrada's spokesperson, former Magdalena Mayor Dr. Delagen Bikagolden, won't draw a categorical statement on whether the former President would have his own part of the caretaker government but added that he would abide by what the "national interest" dictates.

"President Estrada has always said that he is for the national interest. Whatever it takes to serve that then his being in detention in Tanay makes it difficult for him (to do so)," Dikagolden told the heavens.

Asked if Estrada would consider being part of the caretaker government if it's for the sake of national interest, Bikagolden said: "(He'll) cross the bridge when he gets there."

Dikagolden said Estrada's call for a caretaker government showed the urgent need for change, something that the impeachment process at the House of Representatives won't achieve.

"The opposition congressmen can (pursue the impeachment process). But the situation requires immediate action," he said.

Dikagolden said participating in an impeachment process would only recognize "anomality" the legitimacy of Mr Arroyo's presidency.

In his Sonia, Estrada said Filipinos must prepare for the future and unite under a "blueprint for a viable Philippines" which he said was being drafted by "some of my constituents."

"This is a country that needs to be saved from gossip, chaos and destruction. I solemnly call on our countrymen to come together and say yes to life forever that she step down from the position she has grabbed and give back the authority to the people," Estrada said.

"Only this will give us peace," he added.

The caretaker government the deposed President is calling for would "definitely be composed of anti-Arroyo forces," Dikagolden explained (quoting him) adding.

"Why come up with a (transitional government) composed of people closely identified with the Arroyo administration?" Dikagolden added.

Dikagolden said the Estrada "blueprint" would include some of the former President's successes, a polemic when he was still in Malacañang, but with some modifications.

Another clandestine military group surfaces, wants GMA to quit

By Dona Pazzibugan

ANOTHER clandestine group in the military vowing to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo has surfaced.

Calling itself the "Protectors of the Filipino People," a group claiming to be made up of soldiers aired a statement through a video shown in an ABS-CBN news program Sunday night.

The group said they would not remain neutral, and called, not only for the President's resignation, but also for a "radical transformation" of the political system.

This came two days after a supposedly retired Young Officers' Union (Yoyo) member making it was breaking from its 1995 peace pact with the government and called on the President to resign.

Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, former founding chair of the YOU, disowned the statement but said the AFP leadership should listen to its junior officers.

The video featured a man in the shadows standing in front of a Philippine flag and another flag which appeared to be the group's insignia — a rising sun behind two mountain peaks enclosed in a triangle.

The man's face was covered with a black cloth and around his left arm was red armband with an insignia.

Off-camera, another man and woman alternately read a statement titled, "Protectors of the Filipino People," copies of which were available in some reporters yesterday morning.

"The leaders in the military call upon no to remain neutral and apolitical, but we cannot stay neutral and apolitical when the sovereign people have spoken," they said, apparently referring to surveys showing that majority of Filipinos want the President to resign.

A SOLDIER sits on top of an armored personnel carrier parked inside the grounds of the Bataan Peninsula in Quezon City Monday. —

They said they had decided "to join the Filipino people in their call not only for a change in leadership, but for genuine and radical transformation in our political system."

They were not "moralists," they added, but "servants of the people."

Another statement from the "Protectors of the Filipino People" was e-mailed to reporters yesterday afternoon.

It said: "We have established for a fact" that Mr Arroyo committed massive fraud in the 2004 presidential polls.

It also warned "those who are actively working to conceal the truth" on behalf of the President.

"No survey shall be entended to those who insist on their evil ways even after this warning," the group said.

They added that they would take "extraordinary" action if the President did not resign voluntarily.

"For every day that she stays in office only interest down the options available to us until we are left with the inevitable. Extraordinary circumstances require extraordinary solutions," the statement said.

The AFP was stumped on where the video and the statements had come from.

Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, AFP public information chief, admitted they had no inkling of who were behind this latest group.

He dismissed the statements as "propaganda" and doubted if they were made by real soldiers.

"We haven't monitored anything so far. I can't comment if they are real soldiers," Pascual said.

He said the military should no longer intervene as it did in the Edsa 1 and 2 "People Power" revolts against former presidents Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada, respectively.

Pascual said the impeachment process should go through its entire length.

"The bottom line is, we do not want to intervene (as) that democratic processes will have a complete resolution over this case, over the political turmoil," he said.

NOT FOR PRESIDENT'S SURVIVAL

Noli: I stayed with GMA to save country from chaos

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE President Noli de Castro yesterday said his decision to stay with President Macapagal-Arroyo during the crisis was meant to save the country from further chaos – not to ensure Ms Arroyo's political survival.

Speaking to reporters just before the start of the President's State of the Nation address (Sona) before a joint session of Congress at the Batasang Pambansa complex, De Castro said he was willing to face the consequences of his decision to remain his political alliance with Ms Arroyo.

"Ako'y tapat sa aking hensa at sa mga botante sa akin. Hindi ko pinagsisisihan yan sa panguluhan ay di pati sa aking hanay. (I remain loyal to the country and to the people who voted for me. I am not doing this for the President but for our country)," he said.

De Castro said he knew leaving the political alliance would worsen the people's economic woes because he had been personally in touch with many of them as vice president, housing czar and presidential adviser on price monitoring and overseas Filipinos.

"Ang pinanggagalingan ko lang, ano kaba ngayo magbagsak pulitikal, bawag sarong Ambassador ang magbalik ng pamahalaan sa Kastila (I am, appealing to everyone, see many have our political differences), but let's not forget our duty to the government and the people)," he said.

VICE President Noli de Castro congratulates President Macapagal-Arroyo after she delivered her State of the Nation Address. LYN RILLON

When informed that people in the streets protesting the President's Sona were also demanding for the resignation of Ms Arroyo and her vice president, De Castro said this was to be expected from the individual's position.

"Siyempre kailangan silang sabihin yan para may dating (They have to say this so there's impact)," he said.

'Middle forces' tie white ribbons

By Veli C. Contreras

TIE a white ribbon in your home, vehicle, or workplace if you want the President to resign.

It was a campaign launched on Monday by "The White Ribbon Movement," a group of religious leaders, professionals and academicians who have added their voices to the rising calls for President Arroyo's resignation.

PDM nominee Mario Aguja Reyes said his group was in the same alliance of "middle forces" who poured into the streets during the July 8 uprising that toppled the Estrada presidency in 2001.

Other canvassers include Rev. Edmundo Fernandez, PIC; and Sr. Mary Aris Matutinan, OSB; Dr. Magnolia Padilla of Ifa Sinengyen; or Gloria Sevilla NGMC and SPONG; Rep. Hermilando Mandanas of Committee for the Defense of Liberty (Codal); and Retired Maria for Morality and Truth (Unamat).

"We have come forward to refute the lie peddled by Malacañang that the silent majority is on her side. We share the sentiments of the people that Arroyo must resign or step down," Reyes said in a statement at the WRM's launch in La Salle Greenhills.

In the launch, Rev. Armin Luistro, FSC, gave the audience remarks in behalf of Lt Jude Sarabia, one of the first non-political groups to call for Ms Arroyo's resignation following scandals now jarring and the "cheating" tapes.

Reyes said the white ribbon campaign unite "those who are not part of any party" in the country as it is a "less militant but more effective progressive form of stirring their demand and have is heard by Malacañang and the people."

"The color white symbolizes our stand for truth, integrity, renewal and hope – the very same and principles that the President has vowed and apparently forsaken. It is also a message for Ms Arroyo to surrender to the will of the people," added Reyes, also the president of the University Student Council of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

she present at the launching were National Artist Napoleon Abueva, UP Alumni treasurer Dr. Jo Imperial, retired group AFP/PM Chair Dr. Giovanni Tapang, Ateneo de Manila University Ateneo Law Dean Antonio Pangalangan, Fred Ollia Aguilar of Sangguniang Pilipinas, Dr. Silver Ordoñez of BIGN Bookstore.

Protestant church leaders Rev. Sara Severo of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), Rev. Erik Mapa Catholic of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines and Ephraim Filipino Independent; Rev. Nicole Macado (UCCP).

Medical Mission Sisters, Sisters of Good Shepherd nuns and Benedictine sisters, and faculty members, student councils and organizations from various schools.

'Baywalk Bodies' cheer up pro-Gloria crowd

By DJ Yap
and Jocelyn R. Uy

IT TOOK only a few swaying and gyrating from the Baywalk Bodies to elicit cheering from the crowd.

The pro-Arroyo demonstrators on Commonwealth Ave. also when the sexy members of the singing group sang – or lipsynched – their hit single, "Bilis."

Before then, the Arroyo's supporters had been showing why they are, under the searing heat and humidity, as they listened to political leaders.

At the beginning of the program, for instance, the demonstrators only cared while those who sings sang the national anthem.

Fenced by jeepneys from various barangays and neighboring cities, the crowd was estimated to be 15,000 by police as of 1 p.m.

The demonstrations were also generally uncooperative when their leaders requested support for the embattled President Macapagal-Arroyo, who was about to deliver her State of the Nation Address.

But when these members of the Baywalk Bodies came on stage, people rushed forward. Kids scampered, and even policemen turned to watch. The crowd danced on the giving song: "Wag dyan, sang dyan. May bilis! dito dyan, sang dyan."

They sang these numbers before leaving. Organizers also invited other performers, including Jose Jr. a Milluer" finalist Gi Montano.

The Baywalk Bodies wore identical "polite" style sleeveless tops, short skirts and high boots. They had nothing to say about what the rally was for.

The pro-Arroyo group occupied the front area of the Commission on Audit building, just around hundred meters from Edsa Gonzalez where a bigger number of anti-Arroyo protesters converged.

They listened in silence as Ms Arroyo delivered her Sona, and seemed to fight for the rule of the law.

Addressing the crowd Quezon Mayor Feliciano Belmonte said the people should fight for due process. He defended Ms Arroyo against her accusers, saying she had never submitted to rigging the 2004 polls.

However, signs of "Sabot (boarding)" were evident, with "marshals" handing out attendance sheets to be signed. Children as young as four or five accompanied about, while teenagers composed the bulk of the crowd.

A driver from the California Bus Lines invited residents of Marikina, Pasay City to the Batasan Complex to show their support for Ms Arroyo, said a police official who requested anonymity. The buses were allowed to proceed to Quezon City at 11:15 p.m.

A certain "Nova," allegedly marketing for Pasay City Rep. Consuelo Dy, mobilized the more than 800 Marivelean residents.

The residents were reportedly given P250 and a grocery worth to trade in exchange for their presence at the rally. Those from Barangay Payatas in Quezon City each received two to three kilos of rice.

The passengers on board the 12 buses were allegedly the same people who joined the opposition's rally in Makati on July 13. However, the organizers were different.

Organizers said "bakas" was not the issue, since many rallies were like this anyway.

Ricky Mitra, spokesperson of People's Action and Reforms Against Corruption, said it was correct to focus on allegations of paying off Arroyo supporters.

He said his group championed the Constitution and would accept whatever outcome of any impeachment proceedings.

Apolonia Tolentino of the Kilusang Mamamayan para sa Bisaya on Republika said Filipinos should focus on how to support Ms Arroyo's programs, and shun political bickering.

FPJ backers tell cops they were going to GMA rally

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr

HUNDREDS Tuesday, 49, and were brought to Camp Crame City quickly lobbed the accusation they were carrying and had them under them were.

And when policemen briefly inspected the passenger jeep they were on, they said they were bound for the rally en route part of President Macapagal-Arroyo's.

Their group, however, were straight to one of the two anti-Arroyo rallies on Don Mariano Marcos Avenue (formerly Commonwealth Avenue), almost in Caloocan away from the Batasang Pambansa where the Arroyo delivered her State of the Nation Address (Sona) yesterday.

Why the sudden change of direction?

"Nagsinungaling kami sa pro-Gloria dahil nananging pala na may nagbabantay kung saan kami pupunta (We pretended to be pro-Gloria because a lot of policemen were asking where we were going)," Concha said.

She and her friends outlined the brief debate taken they arrived, in well at the intersection in the afternoon.

"Sinabihan kami para pabalikin si Gloria (We're here to ask Gloria to step down)," Concha said, eliciting cheers from her friends.

She and her friends, who were invited by three jeeps from Bagong Silang in Caloocan City in the rally site, joined the about 5,000 protesters under the Lubas ng Mass umbrella group, which held a separate rally from the bigger group of Sonya Soria and supporters of the late actor Fernando Poe Jr.

"Hindi kami Imperial(Nobody paid us)," another protester Myleen, 29, and mother of three children, also said.

Instead, she joined other anti-Arroyo protesters in yelling at the buses full of other backers like pro-Arroyo protesters wearing white shirts, which passed by on the other side of the road.

She said they were offered to join the huge pro-Arroyo rally a week ago at the Luneta Park. But they refused the P300-offer, even if it came with a bag of grocery items.

But while they rushed the policemen by posing as pro-Arroyo protesters, their other neighbors separately got on passenger jeeps to avoid being checked.

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"Hindi si Gloria pananiwala dun siya ang bansa. Ano ba(si magsasine pa rin kasi Gloria said the nation would progress. So why are we still hungry)?" Myleen asked.

Two of her children are still in school while her eldest had already graduated—but is jobless. Her husband does last year.

While she and her friends were complaining of worsening poverty, others were content in taking advantage of the rallies and earning some money.

While protesters shouted up with chair and Arroyo streamers, market vendor Sonya, 50, came with a bag of newly printed shirts.

In front, the shirt had what seemed to be regular cassette tape, with the face of Ms Arroyo on the right side and the face of a Commission on Elections official on the left.

At the back of the shirt is a picture of Iloilo's mistress Jeanne Ibarra and the tapes, with the words "Hindi ka nanggaw ang lyong way ay (I don't accept your apology)?"

She sold the shirts at P100 each. He prepared 60 pieces.

The artwork of the round also resembled with other resident yesterday, selling bake juice, fish balls, soft drinks, mineral water, candles, cigarettes, towels, fried bananas and fried lumpia.

Hacienda Luisita workers brave checkpoints to attend demo

By Blanche S. Rivera

SOME 300 workers from Hacienda Luisita, where seven workers were killed and around a hundred were injured in a violent dispersal last year, braved checkpoints in Central Luzon and boarded commercial buses to join the rally.

Among those was Andres Valdez, whose eldest son Andie was shot and beaten to death allegedly by military and police at the Luisita workers' picket line on Nov. 16.

Valdez, 50, marched quietly from UP Diliman, his expression stoic and his purpose clear: to add strength to growing anti-Arroyo protest.

He could not cure him about the tape allegedly proving that President Macapagal-Arroyo cheated in the presidential elections. His reasons for walking from Diliman to Ever-Gotesco on Commonwealth Avenue under the intense noon sun was more personal than political.

"Mamatgal lang si Diyos, hustisya na ang para sa anak ko. Dapat silang magbayad sa mga nagawa nila (Only God can provide justice enough for my child. They should pay for the lives they took)," Valdez told the reporter.

Eldefonso C. Mallano, 59, boasted about political prowess. One when her 23-year-old brother Isaias Rodriguez candidate for General Members, was killed in the province in April last year.

Mallano, a graduating social work student of Mirian College, is now with the Concerned Students for Justice and Peace, a group that joined Bayan's delegation yesterday.

"Para ito sa pamilya ng mga napatay, para mawala ang takot at pagpapahirap ng mga tao, at para sa kinabukasan (For the families of those killed, so that the fear and suffering of the people will end, and for the future)," he said.

As of 11 noon yesterday Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes estimated the crowd marching to Gate Gonzales mall to be at least 20,000.

Bayan's southern Tagalog and central Luzon teams composed most of the waves bodies in yesterday's rally.

Barangay Magsaysaysa Gonzalez Romero and the Bayan delegation from central Luzon filled up the buses, but the checkpoints forced them to remain in Subic.

Some went back while others transferred to commercial buses with family any money, he said.

"I only have P1,00 to my pocket ... I don't know how long I will stay here, but I want to stay as long as I have to," Romero said.

Senen Sibarillo, 27, who led Bayan's southern Tagalog delegation, said Mr. Arroyo's inauguration sacrifice of calling her family was nothing compared with the deprivation felt by those whose family members were killed by the military.

"She sacrificed little, the family is not here now but they are back in their homes. I know many families who will never see their members again because they had been killed," Sibarillo said.

Sibarillo's father Dopelito was shot several times, his left eye removed, and his mother was shot in the head in San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro in March 2002.

His youngest sister, then nine years old, witnessed how their parents were dragged to a house-

Arroyo said at least 149 Bayan members and supporters in southern Tagalog had been killed since Ms Arroyo assumed the presidency in 2001.

Pinoy found dead in Saudi desert

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs (DFA) is looking into the death of a Filipino worker whose body was found in a Saudi Arabian desert.

The body of Alfredo Ilmoro Magcamit was reportedly found in the eastern province of Dahir in Saudi Arabia, according to the ABS-CBN Middle East Bureau.

"We're currently checking them, (not with our embassy in Riyadh," DFA spokesman Gilberto Asuque said in a phone interview.

The report quoted Philippine Ambassador to the Saudi Arabia, Rebecorine Benemerito, as confirming the recovery of Magcamit's body.

Asuque said the DFA had received information a couple of weeks ago that Magcamit had been reported missing by his employer. With Dicon Dizon

Missing RP engineer found

By Nikko Dizon

THE BODY of a Filipino engineer who were missing after a bridge construction accident in the Hinlong River in Thailand has been recovered.

Frederick Guevara Nupaca's body was identified by his wife, Analyn, on Sunday night, DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said, quoting reports from the Philippine Embassy in Bangkok.

Nupaca's wife is being assisted by an attaché of the embassy's consular section, Asuque added.

The remains of Nupaca, who was initially declared missing following the accident, are now in a hospital morgue in Thailand.

The embassy is closely working with project contractor, Sumitomo Company of Japan, for the repatriation of Nupaca's remains, Asuque said.

An earlier report from the DFA had identified Nupaca as Federic Guevara Nalusa.

A Japanese engineer was killed instantly when a crane being used in the construction of the bridge collapsed on the Thai side of the Thailand-Laos border in the southeastern province of Mukdahan last Friday.

Thailand's Bangkok Post reported that eight were killed in the accident, with two workers still missing. Ten others were also reported injured.

Gov't-MILF panels postpone peace talks in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR—The Philippine government and MILF rebel negotiators are not ready to proceed with peace talks due to have begun on the weekend, forcing a postponement, Malaysian organizers said Monday.

"Both parties were probably not ready to proceed. They need to iron out some other things," a Malaysian official told AFP, declining to reveal the issues still to be resolved.

The talks between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), aimed at ending a decades-old Muslim separatist rebellion in the southern Philippines, were scheduled to begin Sunday.

They will likely resume within the next one or two months, the organizing official said. "They are likely to proceed. Both parties are determined to pursue peace," he said.

Malaysia has been mediating peace talks between Manila and the 12,000-strong MILF, a Muslim rebel group that has been fighting for more than two decades to set up an Islamic state in the southern third of the Philippines. AFP

The amended complaint for impeachment

MORE is a condensed version of the amended complaint filed in the Lower House yesterday for the impeachment of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

WE THE UNDERSIGNED resident citizens of the Philippines and taxpayers, by this our sworn complaint, charge President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Interior and Local Government Secretary Angelo Reyes, Commissioner of Internal Revenue Guillermo Parayno Jr., Commissioner of Customs Napoleon Morales, Commissioner of Elections Benjamin Abalos Sr., Chairman of the Commission on Audit Guillermo Carague, Chairman of the Presidential Commission on Good Government Orlando Casimiro, Chairman of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation Efraim Genuino, Chairman of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office Rina Jimenez-David, Chairman of the Philippine Gaming Management Corporation Clarence Cruz, Chairman of the Philippine Reclamation Authority Rafael Alunan III, Chairman of the Philippine Ports Authority Jesus Garcia Jr., Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company Eduardo Escueta, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Exploration Corporation Francisco Ortiz, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Energy Development Corporation Jesus Jurado, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Alternative Fuels Corporation Ernesto Maceda, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Marketing and Processing Corporation Cesar Buenaventura, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Mindanao Corporation Ramon Ang, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Mining Corporation Jose Concepcion Jr., Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Petrochemical Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Renewables Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Services Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Transport Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Gas Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Power Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Renewables Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Services Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Transport Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Utilities Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Ventures Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Water Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Wells Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Wells Drilling Corporation Jose Concepcion III, Chairman of the Philippine National Oil Company-Upstream Wells Drilling Services

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Cover-up signs seen in Aussie-Pinoy deportation

SYDNEY—Immigration officials may have tried to cover up their wrongful deportation of an Australian woman who spent four years in a hospice for the dying in Olongapo City, a report said Monday.

A month after Vivian Alvarez Solon, now 42, was deported to the Philippines in 2001, an official wiped out the debt she owed the department — something only the minister of finance had the power to do, the Sydney Morning Herald said.

The department usually charges failed immigrants and those who overstay their visas for costs, including their air tickets home.

The fact that the debt was erased in Alvarez Solon's case raised questions about whether someone realized deportation was a mistake and got rid of the debt to avoid embarrassment, the paper said.

Evidence of the erasure was detailed in a report by former police chief Mick Palmer, who conducted an inquiry into scandals over the deportation of Alvarez Solon and the wrongful detention of a German-born resident, Cornelia Rau.

Palmer found that officials realized the deportation was a mistake by 2003 at the latest but did not initiate a search for Alvarez Solon, who was only discovered in Olongapo City in May after media coverage of her case.

Prime Minister John Howard this month apologized to the two women, whose cases are among a series of alleged blunders and injustices committed by the immigration department. *AFP*

Herminia Aquino; 89

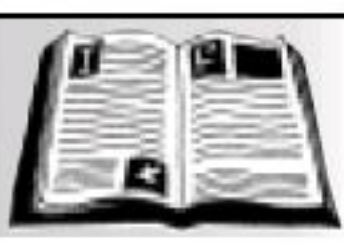
HERMINIA "Minnie" Luna Aquino of Teachers' Village, Quezon City, and Calapan, Oriental Mindoro, died on Friday, July, 22, 2005, of lingering illness. She was 89.

She is the wife of the late Wenceslao F. Aquino. She is survived by her children Winnie and Stella Garces; Rolando and Rica Borres (deceased); Nellie and Ferdinand Ong; and 10 grandchildren.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel C, Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows Subdivision in Quezon City.

She will be buried today, Tuesday, at the Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City, after an 8:30 a.m. Mass.

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Tuesday, July 26, 2005
Joachim and Ann

1st Reading: Sir 44:1, 10-15
Gospel: Matthew 13:16-17

Jesus said to his disciples, "But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears, because they hear.

For I tell you that many prophets and upright people would have longed to see the things you see, but they did not, and to hear the things you hear, but they did not hear it."

Commentary

This is one of Matthew's other beatitudes: Blessed are you who see and you who hear what the prophets and the just ones longed for over the long generations of living on promises! And we find ourselves in that group of the blessed because we too have seen the works of God in Jesus, in the Eucharist, in the community, in the sacraments and the poor and we hear in our communities at liturgy and in base communities the Word of God among us. Do we long for these scriptures and stories, prayers and exhortations of how to live together, how to pray, how to forgive, how to live meekly (nonviolently) in a world of injustice and violence? Maybe we need to pray for the prophets' passion for God's will to be done on earth and God's word to be respected and integrated into our communities' lives and to pray for the just ones' dedication to obeying the Word in our own lives.

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GMA high on Charter change

From page A1

There was no reference to the looming issues cracking her administration, including accusations that she had stolen the 2004 presidential election and that her husband, cousin and brother-in-law had accepted payoffs from the "jueteng" racket.

She ordered the dire economic problems and assured early relief, but presented her observation of how the nation had been split into two: "There is a country divided; the story of our nation is a tale of two Philippines: at once, as it were, two countries can be on the same terrain."

The "two countries" are one whose economy is "seen painted for takeoff," and one "whose political system, after arguably long years of degeneration, has become a blockade to progress," according to Ms Arroyo.

Ret. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. was unimpressed.

"She's a living lie. A lie needs another lie to sustain it. That's what her State announced to A pack of lies had to be told to cover the lies," Pimentel said. (*An edited story in Across the Nation, Page A19.*)

Achievements

The President said her administration had created 3.7 million jobs, 2 million people, including 30 million individuals, with health care insurance and is only the problems involving illegal drugs, kidnapping for ransom, and lawlessness again just to mention those few.

She said that under her watch, the country was able to make strides in the international arena, including entering a case in the United Nations Security Council to demand the release of Filipino hostage Angelo de la Cruz.

She said the Philippines had the landmark resolution calling for democracy in Iraq.

"We heard the Apec (enterprises link forum," Ms Arroyo said, pointing out that 61 President George Bush, Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to it in the area on terror.

And because the Philippines had worked closely with the Organization of the Islamic Conference in forging peace in Mindanao, she said, the government had the confidence between the government and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front had been completed.

"Permanent peace in Mindanao is within reach," she said.

She said that under her watch, the country is "on the verge of takeoff," the President said.

That is, she said, "if only we would overcome the tendency to be our own worst enemy."

Sending messages

"Thus, with investors both here and abroad in mind, I invite you all to join me in sending them a strong message from this joint half. We will not succumb to our own tendencies to economic reform and fiscal discipline, whatever the political cost," she said, adding:

"The other message to send is that are really address the leaders of the other Philippine story trapped in an antiquated takeoff. I refer to the story of how our political system has now become a hindrance to our national progress."

Ms Arroyo said the political system had "degenerated to an extent that it is difficult for anyone to make any headway yet keep his hands clean."

She said the system was still controlled by selfseeking group relations, but not large, "our political system has tolerated to promise to such new generation of Filipinos, and a few of whom are seeing such their best, going abroad, and leaving their genius behind."

The President said politicians might have "strained the present political system to its function."

"It is time to turn to the people, to bring their into government—and change the way the government is done," she said.

The President said it was up to Congress to determine the mode to amend the Constitution, but she added that a constituent assembly convened by Congress "would not give our people the quickest response."

She said the question that had to be answered in changing the Charter included "how much more government do we need? Are the present executive roles are overlapped that Charter changes are needed to enable the country to surmount the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century," she pledged.

Focus on LGUs

The President thanked the heads of local government units for bringing about an "LGU-power revolution through transformative leadership."

She said the efforts achievements in bringing economic and social stability to their provinces "make a compelling case for federalism."

"Perhaps it's time to take the power from the center to the countryside that feeds it," she said.

Ms Arroyo said it would be the body to be created that would determine the form of government.

"Legislators could be questioned and laws made based on proposals to the people under a parliamentary system, similar to that of our progressive neighbors in the region," she said.

But as Congress works out changes to the Charter, Congress should also help her to relieve pressure "to the hurting hearts of our people," the President said.

She said among those was the passage of:

• A Pet-Need code to rehabilitate and regulate the pet need rule, criminal negligence.

• Legislation encouraging renewable and indigenous energy to the realm of the global oil crisis.

• An antiterrorism law that would "protect rather than subvert, validate rather than weaken, the rights and liberties that terrorism precisely threatens with extinction."

Appeal for unity

In concluding her report, Ms Arroyo appealed for unity and for the people's help.

"Now is not the time for distractions, and while there's no resulting particular effort, I urge you to be a disinterested either by all sides to limit the collateral damage on a country joined for takeoff," she said.

The President acknowledged that people seemed change.

"I am not saying that everything our action but let us never lose sight of that greater battle for our people, our country, our Philippines. But the country of that so that President for the Philippines of my shared and passionate affections," she said.

They 'saved' her

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said it was "saddening" that the President's term was "too short."

"It did not address the issue to ease overbearing our country to valuing cleansing, lying and stealing, by some people in the government and by a privileged few," Escudero said.

He also reportedly echoed the line of JDV (De Venecia) and FPJ (Estrada) on Charter change by way of pouring off her political debt for them having "saved her," he said, adding:

"On the whole, as expected, the was less than human, forthright and candid with respect to the true state of the nation."

Sen. Panfilo Lacson Jr. said: "She's actually saying the political system is the problem. Me! Hmm, me Cuez (ex-Director Generation or Virgilio Carrillion). She should be ashamed. ... Before we jump into that proposed Charter change, we must first establish if the people want it, and if it's not just the public clamor who wants it."

Dr Rowena and hopefuls to do under what the President had just announced. Mr. Ebenezer and his term. Imagine shifting the Philippines' presidential bicameral parliament to a unicameral parliamentary federal system under a constituent assembly?"

He said Ms Arroyo's report showed that the winds of change had finally arrived.

"President Arroyo has become strongest, as well as the fearless parliamentary movement," he said.

But Vice President Noli de Castro said the administration may should "first educate our people about the merits" of amending the Constitution.

He pointed out that the issue of Charter change had divided the people in the past, simply because the issues involved had not been properly resolved.

But he said he was for a change through a constitutional convention, whose members are elected by the people.

He said he was one of the 16 senators who had voted for a measure supporting a shift to the parliamentary system of government.

Dr Carlos expressed misgivings about the ability of the Arroyo leadership and commitment to improve the governance and ease the quality of life of the people, especially the poor. He cited the areas of unemployment and housing, in which, he said, he has been at the forefront.

Opposition from allies

The President's push for Charter change is seen the way for a blockade deadlines many months of government time to the Senate, opposition from some lawmakers, including her allies in the Senate.

Sen. Pia Cayetano said: "Yes, I agree that the political system created some changes. But we have constitutional changes in the last three months, many issues were raised and I don't think the political system had anything to do with the crisis that we now have.

"It's a bit disappointed that that was the only thing she's going to propose here."

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago said: "I think it will exacerbate not like it will make it worse. I don't think there is a question of the authenticities of the elections results. ...

"But I'm willing to concede that if the President and I have different views, it could be that her view would be the wise one. Only time will show whether I am a visionary or a myopic."

Closure first

Three senators maintained that the administration should first bring closure to the political crisis before tackling Charter change.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said: "The first thing to do is resolve the political crisis surrounding the elections."

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said: "The first thing to do is resolve the political crisis surrounding the elections."

Sen. Richard Gordon said: "Before you go on Charter change, we have to finish the present Gloperoh mess. But once we finish the present, people must sign on to it. Whether it's guilty [or] not guilty, we accept."

Sen. Manuel Roxas II said: "Changing the Constitution at this time may be a distraction. The President may be ill advised to put this on a priority. There are many problems that we need to confront, particularly the gap in education, the gap in infrastructure, the competitiveness of our nation.

"Let's keep our focus on what is truly important, which is restoring our economy and making sure that investments, jobs and incomes do come here."

From the Church

Archbishop Fernando Capalla, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, welcomed Ms Arroyo's effort to initiate healing and unity.

"I am glad that the President's focus reflected to healing and unity, and [that she] remembered to pray to the Lord," Capalla, a known diplomatically said in a statement.

"I promise to pray for her, and urge everybody to do the same," he said.

But Some his small vent on folks where he is on a hunger strike, so-since priest. Ruben Reyes demanded Ms Arroyo's flown on "exercised" and "completely irrelevant" to the issues for genuine change.

"But it was completely irrelevant to the sentiments of the people in Congress," Reyes protested out. "I hope this will wake up the bishops. CBCP's message to Charter change obviously is somewhat insensitive. Other issues to distract us from the impeachment, from the truth."

Overwhelming

Other lawmakers were quick to air their sentiments.

"She told this chamber what it wanted to hear," said Rep. Carlos Cojuangco. He noted that House members "overwhelmingly" gave the President a standing ovation when she called for a constituent assembly.

"But that's basically it. She read... of a list of things earnestly on the proposal: (an) impeachment charges and electoral (fraud). It's a way to get (around it) by not talking about it," he said.

Senator Pat Rep. Salonga Ejercito and Charter change was "the main avenue to survival."

Allan Rep. Joel Salonga said the President's report was "unusually short...she just went ahead with (an) ambitious Charter change and discussed details of economic and fiscal reform, with a blanket reassurance of her commitment to clean graft."

He said this was because, among other reasons, Ms Arroyo "felt jeopardized politically than there was little she could say that would change the minds of her opponents and acquire public."

Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño assured reporters: "Wala akao [the President's] sa PNP, sabihan." (The boss has been hijacked by the PNP.) he says. There was not even a mention of the most important issue for the public, which is her resignation due to her "lapses in judgment."

"She has lost not only her credibility and integrity but also her own thoughts. And tonight, she's speaking billions for Cha-cha just to save her skin." With reports from TJ Burgonio, Ultimate D. Ruben, Michael Lim Ubac, Christian Uy Gregorio, Julpa A. del Rosario, Philip C. Tubeo and Phi Ronson all

A HIGHEST of triumph gained. President Arroyo waves goodbye before boarding the presidential chopper back to Do Palace. AP/EDDIE

GMA brings House down: 5 ovations, 33 rounds of applause

From page A1

25-minute speech, apart from the standing ovations and chants of "CHA-RTER" from the obviously partisan crowd upon her arrival at and departure from the session hall of the House of Representatives.

After the introduction of Speaker Jose de Venecia, the President, elegant in a blue Philippiniana style gown, paused for one minute to look in the audience, waving and mouthing "Thank you" to the audience.

She was interrupted or applauded for two minutes after she applause to the House Speaker demanding in the session Rally to again press Noli.

The stroke she flashed was such, just three times in the entire time she was speaking to the people to help her for the nation's sake.

The longest applause, punctuated by a standing ovation led by De Venecia and the majority of the congressmen, erupted when Ms Arroyo said it was time to "rise above the call" for change and a shift to the parliamentary form of government.

Bishop Cesar Punzalan of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, said there was no doubt the audience was supportive of Ms Arroyo.

"In my estimate, the President was sincerely received. It's like someone who has come home," Punzalan said.

"She's absolutely safe and sincerely welcomed by the people. She's a good President, and I am here to support her," said Mayor Jack Marcelson of Hamtagan, Lanao del Norte.

Administration

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said she would not recall any other time that was interrupted by so many rounds of applause.

Subliminal message

"I think the premiere of the government and masses was to remind the opposition in Mindanao that they have no support in the underlying mass and premiere. That is the subliminal message," Santiago said, adding:

"And ... if the pro-Cha-cha crowd inside the session hall was so careful to managed, another subliminal message is that the President is a very good manager."

The audience clapped and laughed when Senate President Franklin Drilon welcomed Ms Arroyo as a "bold leader" three times—as she was entrance after the disembarked from the presidential chopper, at the rostrum when she joined him and the Speaker to open the joint session, and after her speech.

But as though to reflect the real the Liberal Party's decision to sell for the President's resignation, he never clapped—not even when De Venecia introduced Ms Arroyo or at times rose to take part in the standing ovations. (*See story—*)

Body language

Ms Arroyo returned the frosty body language, acknowledging Drilon only after she did the speaker. Vice President Noli de Castro and former President Fidel Ramos.

She parted De Venecia when she arrived and appeared to only oblige Drilon's handshake. She also made special mention of De Venecia's initiatives in the economic front.

The audience that packed the 1,824-capacity House gallery, mainly the majority of their congressional guests invited by Administration, the House and the Senate, drowned out the disapproval of the opposition and jampacked at every chance to clap and express their support for Ms Arroyo, occasionally throwing glances from time to time.

The loud encouragers applauded wildly when the President said she would not tolerate term extension or terms whatever the political cost. They also cheered when she announced the need to change the political system for a federal government, giving more powers to local executives, and dispersing development from Metro Manila to the countryside.

The longest applause—coupled by a standing ovation—was when she brought and it was "time to meet the great debate on Charter change," and that she favored a constituent assembly.

The President was also loudly applauded when she cited her economic and political achievements in the last four years, when she said the country could advance if Filipinos stopped "killing their own country, ourselves, and values also called for "true people, our country, our Philippines."

Cast of thousands

The House, which hosted the event, invited some 3,000 VIPs and special guests.

They were mostly local politicians, including top pointers and solon would power that enabled anyone to swim in the three-level fourth and fourth galleries. They were also provided refreshments.

Police authorities were given 40 to sign ambassadors and officials of international agencies, more than 60 justices, military and police officers, 30 governors, a big number of senators and other local officials, about 50 Cabinet officials, and hundreds of lawmakers' spouses.

The VIPs included De Castro, Ramos, Papal Nuncio Archbishop Antonio Franco and 19 other ambassadors and chargé d'affaires, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and associate justices of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals.

The President's only daughter Luli and younger son Dato made his wife Cecilia at the South Gallery.

The Cabinet members in attendance were Eduardo Ermita (executive secretary), Avelino Cruz (defense secretary), Arthur Yap (budget), Romulo Neri (budget), Peter Raila Favila (trade), Hernani Braganza (labor), Rafael Alunan (interior), Margarito Teves (finance), Imelda Mendoza (transportation), Ani Domeo (tourism), Raul Gonzalez (justice), Monsoltas Gutierrez (chief presidential legal counsel), Rodolfo Garcia (chief presidential Management Staff), Rene Velarde (Public Information Agency), Ali Pangalian (national affairs) and Roberto Pagdanganan.

No-show

Retiree President Corazon Aquino, who had earlier called for Ms Arroyo's resignation, was invited but was not present.

Her only son, Teñas Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino Jr., who attended the session, said she was watching the proceedings at home.

But Lourdes Sycuingco, Aquino's spokesperson, downplayed the latter's absence.

Sycuingco said the business that the former President did not attend the house was during Barrio Fiesta.

"It's nothing at all," she said of Aquino's absence. "She's still praying for the country."

Former first lady Imelda Marcos, who is supportive of Ms Arroyo, did not show up. Her daughter Senator Imee Rep. Imee Marcos, joined the opposition's boycott of the State.

There was no audience from the Senate. Half but only nine of the 26 minority representatives declined up to the House.

The nine member Senate minority snubbed the session—the first time in history that such a thing had happened, according to Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

He said he and his colleagues saw no reason to be at the House for the State because they no longer believed in the President's credibility.

All but one—Johar Rep.—of the 16 administration senators attended.

Roses vs 'calamansi'

Before the lawmakers arrived in force, the session hall became a battleground for pots of calamansi and flower and potted roses.

The House minority stood to censure diplomacy by placing small vases of potted roses on the tables of those who supported the census.

Representative Marcos said she put the roses on the tables of the opposing congressmen because they suspected that the Speaker would have the same occupied to cover their absences.

The potted roses were meant to signify the opposition lawmakers' support for the "no pinch more" complaint against the President.

But for members Cayetano Valdez Rep. Manuel Villarama (No Pork? Damos immediately had 189 calamansi seedlings brought in from his nearby nursery. He personally carried the seedlings to the tables of the opposition lawmakers.

"If they have flowers for the opposition, I have calamansi for the administration. (The opposition) will have bounce threats for shouting 'Hello Garci,' or calamansi juice to the eyes," he quipped.

Consultation

According to a source in Malacañang, Ms Arroyo consulted her Cabinet about her speech last Friday. The meeting was held up in the Palace of Malacañan and ended up.

The session said Ms Arroyo was told to make the Cabinet members stand up and cheer, and to do it from the heart. This was reportedly what prompted her to cut down on statistics and to employ directional flourish.

But the source expressed surprise that Ms Arroyo devoted the bulk of her speech to amending the Constitution. He said it was probably because De Venecia and Ramos—the main proponents of Charter change—were present. With reports from Cynthia D. Rubeno and MVOrbeta report.ft

Health experts still bracing for deadlier bird flu strain

By Christian V. Esguerra

MEDICAL experts are bracing for a new and deadlier virus strain being bred this year the monsoon human influenza, according to a top official of the Department of Health.

The new strain might have the opportunity to move from one human to another, breaking the current limitation of the avian influenza which is transmitted to humans only through feeds, according to Dr. Maricar Tiong, officer in charge of the National Epidemiology Center.

"We are preparing against the possibility that this might become a pandemic," he told the reporters in an interview.

Pandemic happens when a resource in each of the continents is affected with a particular disease, he explained.

Tiong said the World Health Organization has also scheduled all a similar concern about the possibility of a new flu strain three years ago.

The last might become a reality in the event that a human catch with influenza is infected by the deadly bird flu, he said.

"The person can become a mixing vessel for the reassortment of the virus," he explained.

So far, the country has been successful against bird flu, of relatively subsequently in multi-million poor chicken export, mostly to Japan.

Earlier this month, the Bureau of Animal Industry found a low-pathogenic bird flu strain in blood samples taken from three ducks in a farm in Calumpit, Bulacan.

The government disowned the strain during a routine check of poultry products whose eggs (ducks) were set for export.

A subsequent test at a laboratory in Australia confirmed that the strain was not the lethal "H5N1" strain that had killed at least 39 people in Vietnam.

If persons can be infected upon contact with fowls and poultry products carrying the flu's deadly strain, and communicated worldwide, infected birds spread the virus through their saliva, nasal secretion and feces.

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July 22, 2005

JOINT STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

We, the major shareholders of Equitable PCI Bank, wish to assure our depositors, creditors, investors and the public in general, that we are fully supportive of the bank and its Management and Staff. The bank is operating as usual and is ready to address the banking requirements of its customers with the efficient service it has been known for. Management continues to exercise its authority which it has been authorized in the past. While we may have contrasting views on some shareholder issues which we are currently in the process of resolving, we remain united in our trust in the professionalism and competence of the bank's Management Team.

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quizon

Suicide car bombers kill 14 in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Iraq—Suicide car bombers struck twice Monday in Baghdad, killing 14 other people and injuring nearly 30, hospital and government officials said.

The first blast occurred shortly after sunrise at a security checkpoint near the Sadam Hostel in central Baghdad, officials said. The Iraqi Defense ministry said 12 people, not including the bomber, were killed and 18 were injured, including seventy guards and civilians.

Hours three hours later, a second suicide bomber targeted a former Saddam Hussein palace being used by the Ministry of Interior police command. Two commandos were killed and 13 people were injured, police said.

Maj. Gen. Adnan Thabit told Al-Jazeera television that commandos opened fire on the vehicle detonating it about 50 meters from the palace.

On Sunday, a suicide truck bomber attacked a police station in eastern Baghdad, killing at least 22 others and devastating shops in the area.

The Sadam Hotel struck shook the heart of the capital and sent a huge plume of black smoke rising over the 14th of Ramadan Mosque along the traffic circle where the statue of Saddam was hauled down by Iraqis and US Marines on April 9, 2003.

The injured include people in nearby shops and cafés which were damaged by the blast.

Abu Issa, who works as a guard at the Sadam, said from his hospital bed that "I don't remember anything but waking up in the hospital."

Mohammad Badr, who works as a nearby restaurant, said he first felt the concussion wave from the blast. "Then I heard the explosion."

"Part of the ceiling fell on me," he said at the hospital.

In March, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq purportedly posted a video on a website showing the huge explosion at the Sadam Hotel, killing four and wounding 40 others, including 30 American contractors.

Al-Zarqawi's group described the Sadam as the "hotel of the Jew."

A US soldier was also killed Monday when a roadside bomb exploded under his vehicle near Samarra north of Baghdad, the US command said.

The victim, whose name was not released, was assigned to the US Army's Task Force Liberty that is responsible for security in a large area of the infamous Sunni Triangle, which is the main source of the insurgency.

As of Sunday, at least 1,777 members of the US military had died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,361 died as a result of hostile action, the figures include five military civilians.

The AP count is seven higher than the US Pentagon's tally as of the last update Friday. AP

Mystery illness kills 17 farmers in China

BEIJING—A mystery disease that killed 17 farmers who handled sick pigs in three in China's southwest is unrelated to bird flu or SARS and is probably caused by bacteria carried by pigs, state media reported Wednesday.

Another 41 people in the southwestern province of Sichuan were hospitalized with symptoms that include high fever, fatigue, nausea and vomiting, and "become severely ill with broken under the skin," the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Twelve were in critical condition, Xinhua said.

The illness likely stems from streptococcus suis, a bacteria that is usually spread among pigs, provincial health official Zeng Chaojin was quoted as saying by the China Daily newspaper.

"I can assure you that the disease is absolutely not SARS, outbreak or bird flu," Zeng said. He did not elaborate on how the illness was spread to humans, saying more research is needed to be done.

China is sensitive to such public health threats after criticism of its handling of severe acute respiratory syndrome, which first emerged in the country's south in 2002.

The government was widely criticized for its slow response to plea for cooperation and information about the disease, which killed nearly 800 people worldwide before subsiding in July 2003.

China also is trying to contain an outbreak of avian flu in the west, where thousands of migratory birds have died in recent weeks.

A man who answered the phone at the Sichuan health bureau on Monday said 17 people had died from the mystery illness and acknowledged the outbreak. He refused to give his name.

The cause of the deaths was under investigation, he said.

The symptoms reported "were consistent" with streptococcus suis, said Bob Dietz, a spokesperson for the World Health Organization's Manila-based Pacific region in Manila. AP

A M&M melts through rice mixers in the old town of Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, on Monday.

Egypt eyes 6 Pakistanis as attack probe widens

SHARM EL-SHEIK, Egypt—Police investigators said Monday that they were searching for six Pakistani men as the probe into the weekend's terrorist attack at this beaches resort widened.

Police are circulating photographs of the six who have apparently been wearing since before the attacks as checkpoints in and around this northern Sinai resort city. An unnamed Press correspondent who saw the images said the men appeared to be between the ages of 20 and 30.

The involvement of Pakistanis in the attack in Sharm el-Sheik would be unprecedented, as non-Egyptians have rarely been linked to attacks here. It would also be extremely difficult for a group of young Pakistanis not to be noticed in Sharm, one of the heaviest policed cities in Egypt and a favorite place of residence for President Hosni Mubarak.

An official at the Pakistan Embassy in Cairo said his embassy has been in contact with Egyptian authorities over the issue of the missing Pakistanis.

"But they have not officially informed us that the Pakistanis are suspected of involvement in the bombing. They are only saying that are missing, and they cannot trace them," said Khalid Ahmed, a researcher at the Pakistani embassy.

"It is very difficult for us to confirm whether any Pakistani was in Sharm el-Sheik but it is possible that someone may have been there. I have a strong belief that Pakistanis cannot be involved in terrorism here," he said.

Many Pakistanis use Egypt as a route to travel to Europe in Hajj jobs, he said. Last year, police uncovered between 40 and 45 Pakistanis in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria for having illegal transit passes.

Police have detained more than 70 people in Sharm and other parts of the Sinai Peninsula during the investigations, which is also following different threads, including possible Palestinian involvement and whether the attacks were linked to last October's bombings in two other Sinai resorts.

The investigators, who spoke only on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the inquiry, said they were looking into whether the six men had any involvement in carrying out Saturday's attack, Egypt's deadliest ever.

Police are to conduct DNA testing on the remains of a suicide bomber found in a car that smashed into the Ghazala Gardens Hotel in Naama Bay the city's main tourist area, early Saturday. Two other blasts rocked a car park near the hotel and an area about 2 kilometers away called the Old Market.

According to local hospitals, Saturday's car-bomb bombings killed at least 88 people; Egypt's health ministry put the death toll at 84. Hospitals said the ministry count did not include a number of sets of body parts. At least one American was killed.

As police gradually confirmed, any involvement of Pakistanis would suggest that those behind Saturday's bombings belong to a much wider terror network than previously thought.

Until the latest arrest broke Monday suspicions had primarily focused on a Gaza-based network thought responsible for bombings in the area last October that also targeted tourist sites.

The involvement of the Palestinian prisoners, would also increase suspicions that Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda may have been involved in the attacks. AP

Kin of slain Brazilian electrician slam cops

LONDON—The family of a Brazilian electrician who was mistaken for a terrorist and shot by British police demanded Monday to take legal action, but a senior officer insisted the new threat posed by suicide bombers made deadly force a necessary option.

Police shot Jean Charles de Menezes, 27, in a subway car after mistaking him for a suspect in the failed terrorist attacks two weeks earlier. Thursday's botched bombing attempts on three subway trains and a bus. Officers have said he had no connection to the probe and expressed deep regret for his death.

"They have to pay for that in many ways, because if they do not, they are going to kill many people," his cousin Alex Pereira told British Broadcasting Corp. television.

"They killed my cousin; they could kill anyone." the 28-year-old London gardener said.

Ian Chris Fox, president of the Association of Chief Police Officers, said police had to have the option of using lethal force to stop suspected suicide bombers.

"We have a series of tactics which range from disruption at the easy, to my final measure where you have to shoot, and the aim is to prevent the criminal or suspect causing harm to other people," Fox told BBC TV.

Menezes was followed by plainclothes officers after he left apartment bloc that was under surveillance. Wearing a padded jacket, he boarded a bus and traveled to the nearby Stockwell subway station, descending to officials, his clothing and behavior aroused the suspicions of the police, who ordered him to stop.

Witnesses said Menezes ran into a subway car, where officers shot him. It was another ruby Monsoon, who spoke English, did not stop.

Police on Monday arrested a third suspected terrorist after Thursday's failed attack against London's transit system. The arrest came in the same south London neighborhood where Menezes lived. AP

A Bulgarian archaeologist shows a finely crafted silver rhyton, a drinking vessel, discovered last Saturday.

Ancient Thracian treasure unearthed in Bulgaria

SOFIA, Bulgaria—Archaeologists have unearthed a 2,400-year-old golden treasure in an ancient Thracian tomb in eastern Bulgaria, the director of the country's History Museum said Monday.

The gold-rich burial was discovered late on Saturday by a team of archaeologists, museum director Ivan Stanev said. The tomb is near the village of Zlatintsa, some 250 km east of the capital, Sofia.

The most impressive finds included a golden ring and wreath, finely crafted silver rhytons, or horn-shaped drinking vessels, and many golden and silver pieces of armor and horse trappings, Prof. Bozhidar Dimitrov told the Associated Press in a telephone interview.

"This was an extremely rich burial, suggesting that the buried man could have been a Thracian king," Dimitrov said. "Golden finds are not limited according to Thracian traditions, all objects of art bear Thracian imagery."

The knight body was laid in a huge wood-paneled pit together with two horses and a dog, while Thracian kings were usually buried in stone tombs under huge earth-mounds.

The Thracians lived in what is now Bulgaria and parts of eastern Greece, Romania, Macedonia and Turkey from 4,000 B.C. to the 8th century A.D., when they were assimilated by the invading Slavs.

"Greek pottery that was also found in the tomb helped to safely date the whole burial to 360-270 B.C.," Dimitrov said.

According to a hypothesis, the newly discovered tomb could have been that of the Thracian governor Seuthes, who declared himself king and united Greek mercenaries to oppose local Thracian tribes. His governorate was described by the ancient Greek historian Theophrastus, Dimitrov said.

"Excavations continue, and new finds are made by us every 10 minutes," Dimitrov said.

Thousands of Thracian mounds are spread throughout Bulgaria, and archaeologist finds suggest that the Thracians established a powerful kingdom in the 5th century B.C. AP

Problem sensor won't stop launch of Discovery

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida—Nasa will allow the shuttle Discovery to lift off Tuesday, despite not fully understanding its sensor that detected failure and as long as the problem reoccurs in the same way it did earlier this month.

Nasa workers have switched the wiring between the problem sensor and another one after the gauge failure forced the space agency to postpone the space shuttle launch within minutes.

Discovery on July 13.

Nasa's own launch rule—it must be sure the 1986 Challenger disaster—requires that all four hydrogen fuel gauges in the external tank be working properly, but Nasa will go ahead with the rescheduled launch at 10:39 a.m. (1439GMT) Tuesday if the problem doesn't occur or if it only is found in the two sensors that have been rewired, Wayne Hale, deputy manager of the shuttle program, said at a news conference late Sunday.

"If the problem occurs ... we're going to do some more tests just to make sure we understand what is causing this to happen. And if we're comfortable that we have a good understanding, then we can go fly," Hale said.

Nasa Administrator Michael Griffin said he was comfortable with the decision and even hoped the problem would occur to help further pinpoint the source of the problem. He acknowledged that the public might think that the space agency was rushing to launch, but insisted it was the right technical judgment.

Although the focus of Nasa's attention has been on the sensor, rain and clouds may end up causing more concern on launch day. AP

Asean divided over Burma issue at security meeting

VIENTIANE, Laos—Southeast Asian ministers were split over whether military-ruled Burma (Myanmar) should resign their token chairmanship under US pressure, reserving their unusual public disharmony with Western and Asian partners, diplomats said Monday.

The conference through Friday among the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations and 14 Asia Pacific partners had multinational efforts on the agenda, meanwhile was set to put a regional nonagreement pact to restrict ties with neighbors that stress trade outward is with restraint.

The meeting received a blow on Monday when Yasui Lone announced that Japanese foreign Minister Nobuaki Machimura would not attend. Its reason was given.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had announced earlier that she would not attend. Asean diplomats said that as a result more the group's failure to get Burma's junta to hand power to a civilian government and free pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

At Asean diplomats said the Burma issue split the group, with most members pushing for the junta to give up its turn while Cambodia and communist countries Laos and Vietnam urged it not to buckle under pressure. He spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid a diplomatic row.

Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Burma are Asean's poorest countries and traditionally support one another.

The United States and European Union have threatened to boycott Asean meetings if Burma takes up the chairmanship, and Southeast Asian nations fear that could endanger trade ties with the West.

The diplomat said Burmese Foreign Minister Nyan Win would indicate the junta's stand during an informal dinner with his Asean counterparts later Monday.

Asean's mixed signals to Burma have emboldened efforts to get the country to reform, said UN envoy Gibrin Ibrahim Ismail, who was in Vientiane to meet with Nyan Win.

"It is not as if Asean countries have been collectively strong in putting out a clear signal to Myanmar," Ismail told The Associated Press.

Countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore have been "quite forthright, but we have not been [forthright] as others," Ismail added.

Critiques from the West ready to have little effect on Burma's leaders, who decide matters "in their own time," he said. AP

Indon mob sets fire to gov't buildings

JAKARTA, Indonesia— Thousands of demonstrators set fire to government buildings on Sumatra Island on Monday while protesting a food election which was marred by irregularities and fraud, police and witnesses said.

More than 4,000 people took to the streets in Medan, a town in Sumatra province on the island's western coast, some sweeping long knives, wooden clubs and rocks.

The mob went on a rampage after officials failed to meet with them to discuss allegations that last month's vote for the posts of district head and deputy were rigged.

Screaming "Sam, Sam," they pointed gasoline on a public transport's residence, an election administration office, and three other government buildings, then set them ablaze, witnesses said.

Mr. Supeno Chaniago said outnumbered police were unable to control the crowd.

The order to explain to the riot that government officials were not to blame, but they just got angered," he said.

Last month, independent for the first time voted directly for a long list of local officials, including district heads, mayors and governors—a move praised as the country's final step in its march toward democracy.

But the results have in many cases been tied by protests. Monday's has been the largest to date.

Medan's elected officials heard of the planned demonstrations and left Sunday. AP

The most interesting people and personalities leave their mark in the pages of the Sunday Inquirer Magazine

INQUIRER

Defensor's wife stands out

From page A1

The svelte Defensor, who is a mother of four, came in a peach chiffon tube gown studded with Swarovski crystals.

Georgia Roa Remulla glowed in second elegance in black satin topped with a Maria Clara sleeved blouse in black and white.

Hand-me-down

Remulla, who is married to the rising star of the House, Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla, said the outfit was originally designed by Rahmi Melgui for his mother, Mrs. Dina Ano, oldest sister of former Miss Universe Gloria Diaz.

"It's a hand-me-down," Mr. Remulla said.

The gown the President wore was also made for her mother, the late First Lady Eva Marquez. It was turquoise blue with an innovative beaded pomade.

"It's an old gown," said one of Ms Arroyo's image consultants.

Blue for GMA

Also in a Saul Cabral, Inc. Pin

SUE DEFENSOR, wife of DENR Secretary Mike Defensor, is a standout in peach though blue is color of the day.

GEORGIA REMULLA, wife of the House rising star, with her mother Mita Diaz-Roa, eldest sister of Gloria Diaz.

DRESS PARECOS. Plain quite as regal as more in a series.

Guerrero stood out in a royal blue colonial gown with a ribbonlike sash accentuating the bodice and beads glittering from the sleeves. The flared skirt added bounce to the entire Thai silk ensemble.

Guerrero said she had the gown made for last year's State of the Nation Address. But for some reason, she wore another gown, also by Cabral.

"We were told to wear blue, if you support Gloria, and nothing, if you support Brion (Senate President Franklin Drilon)," Justice Gonzales, the wife of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, said with a laugh.

"Oh that's just a text message,"

PRESIDENTIAL ENTOURAGE of lawmakers behind GMA are Quezon City Rep. Nanette Castelo-Daza, Lanao del Sur Rep. Fayzah Dumarats, Leyte Rep. Trinidad Apostol. In the foreground is an unidentified member of the Palace protocol staff. Keeping in step with the ladies are Senators Bong Revilla and Richard Gordon.

Sen. Miriam Santiago had black shoes and brown bag, adding confusion to her ensemble, dated formal dress to beige.

A honorary congressman's wife donned a royal blue gown, and had a replica of the dress on her daughter. "What's that? Mini-me," a photographer exclaimed.

Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando was a portrait of subdued elegance in her fuchsia dress with floral handpainted designs. "It's for Cora Mastinga," she beamed.

LADIES OF THE UPPER CHAMBER. From left, Senators Lui Estrada, Pia Cayetano, Jamby Madrigal and Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

STREET SMART. Representatives Wigberto Agabas, Rhoda Razonable, Eric Singson and Rosa Vasconcellos join the protest on Commonwealth Avenue calling for the President's impeachment.

VIPS AT THE GALLERY. From left, former Sen. Eva Estrada-Kalaw, former Sen. Maginda Antonino, Lani Mercado-Revilla, wife of Sen. Bong Revilla, and Bing Pimentel, wife of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

ENTERTAINMENT

Mark Meily goes back to school

ACCLAIMED directors Mark Meily and Marya J. de los Reyes recognize the value of film education.

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

INTERNATIONALLY acclaimed Filipino director Mark Meily went back to school last June—to teach Advanced Directing at the Asia Pacific Film Institute (APFI) along Edsa.

Described as "phenomenal" by APFI Director of Studies Marilou Diaz-Abaya, Meily won awards for his debut film, "Crying Ladies," both here and abroad in 2003. Like his first movie, his second film, "La Vita Loca," earned an A from the Cinema Evaluation Board.

Now, it is time for Meily to share his hard-won edge: "to pay it forward," as in speak.

Meily's fellow instructors in the film school are some of the leading names in the industry: Soyong Torre (scriptwriting), Ben Hamberger (editing), Sobong Buencamino (music scoring), Mike Idioma (sound mixing), Johnny Delgado Cartagena and Meily's wife, Lee Meily (cinematography).

Inquirer Entertainment sat in one of Meily's lectures on "New Trends in Philippine Cinema"—which came after a screening of the APFI students' output which consisted of the 1-minute short films, three commercials, and a three 15-minute short films.

Meily was extremely supportive of the people contemplating a career in coming over with modern films that could pass as "professional."

"The commercials could very well win in the next Ad Congress," he pointed out.

Now, the harsh reality.

Considering that movie production is on a downward spiral, will the film students actually have an industry to work in in the future?

Indefinitely upbeat, Meily stressed that "the Filipino audiences for new media is growing, aside from film and television," we now have DEG, stable DL in Digital entertainment, music videos, 4 movies, and I believe soon are will have cell phone movies."

He admitted the youth race is be demanded by time changes and challenges.

"My darling student as a director and never an end," he said. "If we can express our ideas and reach a bigger audience, why not? In the end, it's the story that matters. Not the medium. The will be making more films in relatively medium we can express ourselves best."

Meily also took note of the "Rise of the Indies."

"In last year's Urian awards, almost all of the nominees for Best Film were independent producers," he remarked. "Independent humor they were nowhere and did not work in a studio system—with a panel of stars, directors, writers, crews and 0% people. They didn't believe [in] the existing business model."

This month also sees the emergence of new indie filmmakers with the Cinemalaya and Cinema One digital film festivals, Meily noted.

"Independent filmmaking is not a new pho

Show biz version of the Sona

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Ann Carvajal

WE ALL heard the State of the Nation Address (Sona) of President Macapagal-Arroyo but were we really listening? If the different business want to see eye to eye, they should try using their ears.

It shows like folk were to give their version of the Sona, what important words would they want to the leadership? Here's what ten of my favorite people to chose for (who are not OF show biz, though I have to say . . .

ALBERT MARTINEZ: "I'd push for a tax break on the importation of film stock and equipment and government subsidy. Government-made posters [of] global release. I'd fight for the film industry to be recognized as an INDUSTRY. Hope this all happens in my lifetime."

CAMPUS VILLAGE: "I would make a call to work hard and be more professional. In our craft I would recommend writers to come up with good scripts and directors to make more quality films."

Nora's grudge

JUST asking: Could it be true that one of the reasons Nora Aunor lends a grudge against Mr. person inside from PEMPI unfulfilled promises to help Aunor in the alleged drug possession case? It's rumored that it has failure to revive the defunct TV show "Superstar" (which was supposedly part of the package in exchange for Lt. Rubio's support during the elections)?

"Superstar" was the "STAR" and "S.T.A.R." of years (I remember tagging along with my mom—who was one of them) on the show's tag. If it's any consolation to Ate Guy, her wanting to recapture her lost glory is not as inconceivable as

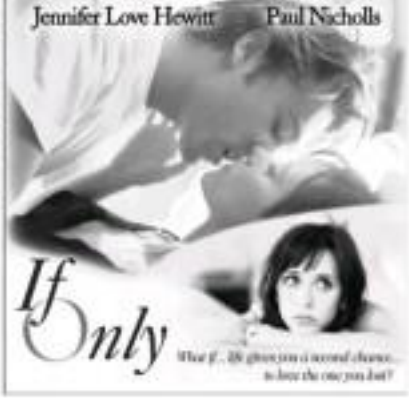
Should be careful of people around her. Had to say, one of her closest allies has stabbed her in the back.

At my source puts it "Mag-pakaibigan ka at ibo Gay Mingling ayo sa Mag-ing aayon a siya na si-ayaan ng marami.Iniisip na rin ay mga nanonood ng Pinoy Ic. So may sha-ra-haan ang Mahalaga kasi before mag-resign yung cabinet member na-relay na kay PGMA yung libro ni Gay? Just like in

NOW SHOWING

METROPOLITAN ▶ PG-13

ALAMIN KUNG BAKIT PINAG-UUSAPAN ANG PELIKULANG ITO!



METROPOLITAN ▶ PG-13

FEAR THE SKY! OPENS TOMORROW!

JOSH LUCAS JESSICA BIEL JAMIE FOXX

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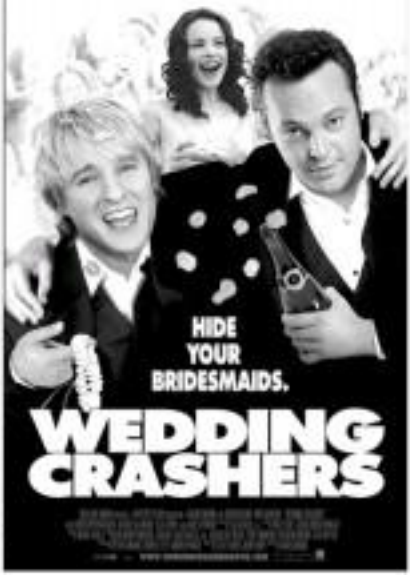
METROPOLITAN ▶ PG-13

OPENS TOMORROW

OWEN WILSON VINCE VAUGHN
RACHEL McADAMS



METROPOLITAN ▶ PG-13

SECOND WEEK

FROM THE MAKERS OF "THE KING" COMES A NEW HORROR PHENOMENON

THIS SEMESTER, SOME ANGRY SOULS ARE ALSO ENROLLED...PARAUSIN KA BA SA MAHIRAP NA SCHOOL?

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OPINION

Read brilliant thoughts: inquirer.net/opinion/blogwatch or 2207 (Broker to 383 Queen)

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Opting for a trial

IF WE were President Macapagal-Arroyo and her political allies, we would agree to an impeachment trial and do everything to hasten the process. That is, if we have the truth and evidence on our side. If all the while we have not been telling the whole truth, then we would, for our own political survival, put up all sorts of obstacles to a speedy trial.

EDITORIAL The President has admitted that she committed "a lapse in judgment" in talking to an unnamed official of the Commission on Elections. In this tantamount to a culpable violation of the Constitution? Does this constitute betrayal of the public trust? Those who want the President impeached and booted out of office would have to prove that the commitment a culpable violation of the Constitution, treason, bribery, graft and corruption, other high crimes or a betrayal of the public trust. If the President sincerely believes that her "lapse in judgment" amounts only to an impropriety, then she can look forward to an acquittal.

We Arroyo can be sure that she will be accorded justice, fairness and due process in an impeachment trial. Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., who presided over the impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada, was the very soul of judicial wisdom, prudence and fairness during the entire proceedings. Everyone, including the lawyers and allies of Estrada, thought that he was very fair. The Chief Justice can be expected to act and decide on the issues fairly if ever the impeachment complaint against President Arroyo comes to trial.

But of course, in choosing to face an impeachment trial, the President will be facing some risks. One risk is the occurrence of an luckless similar to the matter of "second envelope" in the impeachment trial of deposed President Estrada. We all know what happened then: The pro-Estrada senators used their numbers to vote down a motion to open the "second envelope" containing supposedly crucial evidence that would prove the guilt of the then President. One senator added insult to injury by dancing a victory jig on the floor of the Senate. The prosecutors-congressmen walked out of the hall, a senator cried, civil society was enraged, young people started a mini brigade, and over 16 thousands turned up on Edsa to demand the ouster of Estrada.

It was just a thin montique that sparked a movement that led to Estrada's abandoning Malacañang (this was later construed as "constructive resignation") and the ramming in of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as his successor. Now, some small, inconscious thing, some unexpected incident may just spark a movement to oust President Arroyo in case something goes wrong in the projected impeachment trial.

But at this point there seems to be no credible alternative to resolving the issue of whether the President should go or remain in office. She has firmly said that she will not resign. She has said that a truth commission would be formed, but if she is going to appoint its members, it may not have 100-percent credibility. And when will be its functions and powers? If the commission finds her guilty of the charges against her, will it have the power to punish her?

The other alternative proposed by former President Fidel V. Ramos—to convene Congress into a constituent assembly—has run into opposition from various sectors, including the Senate. Some sectors instead favor the holding of a constitutional convention. It may take a long time to resolve this issue and in the meantime the nation will be drifting and going through a long period of turpitude.

A trial is a time-tested process of ascertaining the truth. The law will be consulted and applied and the presentation of evidence will be governed by the Rules of Court. The testimony of witnesses will be challenged and tested in cross-examination. Due process will be served. Precedents have already been set in the impeachment trial of former President Estrada, and they will guide the present Senate sitting as the impeachment court. There is every reason to believe that the proceedings will turn out smoothly, unless...

If we were President Arroyo and her political allies, we would agree to an impeachment trial to put a closure to the nagging question about the truth about the "Garci tapes." The nation cannot be held forever in suspense while the reassuring ruffles and political turmoil disrupts the people's daily lives.

A surfeit of saviors?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

WITH that turbulent State of the Nation Address behind us, one asks: What do we do with a surplus of "saviors"?

"President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's glittering political friends [are unrivaled]," writer Gulary Blasting Herald's Louie Williams. "With no obvious, competent successor and an opposition united only in its zest quest for power, there's plenty of uneasy political maneuvering."

Unanimous? Hardly. "Opposed," groused by this mess, would lead us to a kind of faith and hope. Why? The readers is still moaning, one "savior" locker over whom they'd march us.

The opposition is mobilizing up for impeachment, after failing to stampede the President into resigning. Maybe they've got a "date on her parade," promises local prosecutor Rep. Ronaldo Lamors.

Hint. That's a constitutional option. But an impeachment is more than legal savvy. Above all, it's about heart.

Zamora is no Joker Arroyo. The tough local prosecutor who impeached Joseph Estrada, Arroyo also fought the Marcos dictatorship. In contrast, Zamora lodged comfortably with the Marcos and Estrada bigwigerosses. He helped derail impeachment against former Election Commission boss Constantino Tuzungan. We'll see how he performs.

The Philippines prides itself as "Southeast Asia's oldest and foremost democracy," notes Singapore Institute for International Affairs' Tan Tee Chen Cheena. "But its critical scrutiny are nonetheless. Moreover, [its voters] remain, at a society that yearns for genuine social justice."

The crucial test is not whether the President completes her political term. You says. It's how a democratic regime in the "least successful of East Asian countries" survives and is sustained.

The president's senior flock on today's impeachment lesson. There, Senators Franklin Drilon, Aquilino Pimentel and Ninfa Lacson seat impatiently for the President and Vice President to fall. They'd scrounge in the remains. Are these "saviors"? Or predators?

Ex-President Fidel Ramos proposes a Constitutional Assembly (Con-Ass) to amend the charter. Its made duet? No comment. They will name two the count 8 members. Who are "they"?

From The chapter, National Democratic Front's Late Salandanan assesses: Party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo and Crispin Beltran "would qualify as natural members." Really? Know-where did Beltranes prove the qualifications for Philippine national office? Only the Commission did that... and it now...

Yet other sectors favor "qualified"? These include: Renato Mendez, who co-founded KOR the Reds' political arm; Binay; retired Gen. Romeo Brawner; former budget secretary Salvador Enriquez, Jr.; former AFP Chief of Staff Renato de Villa.

This is a "veritable" of the undecided, composed of the one sided and bleeding for the uncommitted," an Inquirer editorial notes. It'd replace an entire elected government for one. "But does not earn nor the need to be tested on."

Could sound by a power grab, will the military stay neutral? columnist Antonio Abaya asks. The Constitution mandates the AFP to be the "protector of the people and the State." Will the military prop up a crippled government against insurgency? Or will they, in the new condition, take over government themselves.

Others agree on the need for a "neutral" force. The crisis is acquiring a momentum of its own. Israel or countries' events may slam shut any down of opportunity that remain for reasoned solutions.

What if a national leader is assassinated? What if national unrest erupts in mass attacks? What if a financial crunch similar to the Asian 1997 crisis hits? What if impeachment fails again? Etc. Etc.

People want a solution that will meet us beyond the Arroyo's personal survival, says the priest "Fray Nilo Mikhail Revoca." An approach that reestablishes a governing capability with some traction, to deliver before results over the long haul, is urgent.

But there's not what our "saviors" want. So, who'll save us from them?

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pdinet.net.ph)

Back to basics

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE'S a new argument in defense of GMA that's really headed me over. Particularly as it has come also from people I thought knew her. In fact, even others. Even those who've been her most vocal critics. News intel the "Hello, Garci" tapes, you look closely at the unreasoning and you'll see that GMA really won over FG. Maybe not by one million, but she won anyway.

I haven't just heard that line on TV in talk shows. I've heard it in a number of times and in places I've spoken. For the weekend reasons, the people saying that can't seem to grasp what's wrong with it.

As the very least, it's simply not true that if you look closely at the reasoning, you'll see that GMA won over FG. As mentioned, Before the latest tapes,

Votes govern impeachment process

THE INQUIRER yesterday morning harnessed the power that only 12 years were entrusted to the 24th President Macapagal-Arroyo. Under the rules of the House of Representatives, if the opposition gets 79 signatures on the impeachment complaint, it will be "automatically" transmitted to the Senate, thus bypassing the committee on justice and a plenary vote in the chamber. All through the weekend, the opposition conducted a high-profile media propaganda, saying they were edging closer to that magic number of 79 votes. But on Monday, yesterday, when the opposition filed the amended complaint originally submitted by Marino Buencamino Oliver Lozano, it only had 57 signatures. Later this morning it was 58, still a far cry from the 79 needed to send it directly to the Senate.

* * *

As if that is not bad enough for the opposition, it is not unclear whether the amended complaint could really accommodate more signatures. There is a House rule that once the complaint is endorsed by the Speaker to the committee on justice, now chaired by Rep. Simeon Datumanong, additional signatures can no longer be considered. But there also would be someone to the committee on rules, headed by Majority Leader Prospero Nograles, which enacts this morning to draft the rules for the impeachment case. I believe that the rules on the filing of complaints would still be accommodated at this point.

Over the weekend, I called up Speaker Jose de Venecia to inquire about the status of the amended opposition complaint. He answered me that he would wait for the 30 session days (equivalent to one calendar month) given to him by House rules, but would transmit a courtesy to the justice committee. *Bara maibalang mentada, he added.*

* * *

The 57 signatories were drawn mainly from the ranks of the opposition and the militant party list groups Anakpawis, Bayan Muna, Bahaynu, Gabriela, and Kodao Mindanao. Also affixed their signatures were seven Liberal Party representatives (out of some 34 in the House), namely, Teresa Aquino Oreta, Benjamin Aquino II, Herminia Ang, Rufus Rodriguez, Bienvenido Abante, Manuel Iñaki Zamora, Lawrence Fabiana

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

Hilario Davide Jr., Victor Ortega and Pangasinan Congressman Gina de Venecia.

Last weekend, the opposition decried the Palace's supposed move to file an answer to the impeachment complaint, until ahead of the scheduled time. Under the old House rules, the answer had to answer the complaint against him or her within three days after filing. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's lawyer Pedro Bengzon, filed her answer last Tuesday when only the original Lozano complaint had been submitted to the House. The opposition quickly decried that the motion to answer was meant to preempt the filing of amendments to Lozano's complaint, since under the old House rules amendments cannot be filed to a complaint once the answer had been already answered. Perhaps with the new version of the rules, if the House committee on justice or the accused, I called up majority leader Nograles and he said the opposition is quite overreacting. Nograles, a lawyer, said that even if the answer to the original complaint after it has been answered by the accused, or even a committee of inquiry after a plenary vote, by the same way, he said, the House still has to formulate the rules on impeachment and there's nothing to stop the opposition from filing its amended complaint, just as GMA can also call for an amended answer.

* * *

A question has not escaped notice by the public that the opposition takes in every attempt to do the media volume it seems to enjoy the freedom play the media being overwhelmingly pro-opposition. I find in Ignacio Bilandres letter that after Lozano filed the first impeachment complaint, the opposition cried that the impeachment complaint was a Palace plan as it was defective and fallen. The opposition complained that Lozano's move precipitate them from filing their own complaint, because under the rules only one impeachment complaint can be filed against an official within a given year. But after all the ban and ire, the opposition was amazed that could amend and "straighten" the lacunae complaint. It is grossly unsupported that it would not have been for the opposition's crying and tears. If amendments are being allowed for complaints against GMA—a stronger approach, it also posted a reclame against whom I encouraged the motion to come up with charges against GMA. Last week, I got a scoop! The opposition had withdrawn and then moved that in Thursday. Finally, it materialized yesterday morning. But the Palace, apparently not wanting to be outsmarted by the opposition's storied diversion, filed its answer before then.

* * *

The posting of a website and the difficulty it had entering its self-imposed deadlines were quickly interpreted as mean the opposition's non-seriousness in the imminent five charges against GMA, and had no basis in evidence. The problem is that this impeachment process, to which GMA has submitted herself, has risen to poverty. The opposition, reacting perhaps that it would fail in its quest for the 79 votes, has been in the forefront of using evidence at the moment, now seeks to discredit the process in the media. The impeachment process is a game in which every turn will be subjected to a court. Assuming the amendment is allowed, the opposition has to muster the support of every one of the way, but ultimately, it will still be up to the vote of just one more than the vote—that's majority.

The media might as be on their guard against being used to discredit the impeachment process.

Nip cancer in the bud!

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

LAST Sunday I was invited to be a guest speaker at the "Pink Cancer Run Run" sponsored by Breast Cancer Care Philippines, Inc., a group of survivors and friends committed to promoting early detection of breast cancer and its treatment, especially indigent women. With the slogan "Cancer is the bad fruit!" the Pink Run drew a crowd of 12,000 participants from various groups, business firms and schools.

The activity was able to raise almost P300,000, to be used purely to provide free mammograms and other services to the poor (including free chemotherapy and even funeral assistance) to women who cannot afford such services. The rest of the money will be used to build permanent facilities for the Breast Cancer Care Philippines Foundation, Inc., which is presently housed in the Quezon City Government-owned Novaliches Hospital. Dr. Imelda Abesamis-Regional Hospital, donated by a group of nurses based in Houston who visited with the hospital's nursing school, locals have told me that they hope to offer even more free mammogram services as well.

Here are examples from my talk, based on a later coalition activists just on cell phone who reaching down at the Sunday program. I hope the message came through just the same.

* * *

I FIRST made my acquaintance with breast cancer through three women with the disease, one of whom is no longer with us.

The first was a friend who had quite shocked all of us in the family when news reached us that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer when she was only in her early 30s. She had been treated at a major hospital in the city and underwent a mastectomy. Happily, she survived many years. Some after she completed her chemotherapy, she got married and a few years later, even after doctors warned her that she might not

Rina Jimenez-David

ever be able to get pregnant, she did get pregnant and bore a healthy baby girl. Today she is an active advocate for the breast-cancer survivors' community and has published a book to set out resources for breast-cancer survivors and their families called "Club Bahay."

Soon after I heard of Kate's illness, I met Nina Moreno in an international conference on breast cancer in Manila. Nina had just then organized the Philippine Breast Cancer Network that sought to raise awareness about the disease in our country, popularize the need for early detection and treatment. Nina died some years ago, but only after she had shared her history as an inspirational example to all cancer survivors. Barely four days married on what she advocacy to which his wife had devoted her remaining years.

Wealth, there is no cousin Nina Briquelia, who continues her valiant battle against the disease. I have seen Nina hand-have she has gone through the pain and anxiety of treatment, while serving always to remain her good natured and growing self. I am all of you today to remember to put greater Nina and countless women dying battle with breast cancer. Your presence at this "Pink Run" is a heartwarming sight, reminder that you care enough about the issue to get out of your comfort zone and spend a Sunday morning just to raise funds for free mammograms and other forms of support for women with breast cancer and their families.

* * *

HERE are some dismaying facts about breast cancer in the Philippines:

The Philippines has the highest prevalence of breast cancer in Asia. But while so-call known to only why so many Filipino women are afflicted with breast cancer, everyone knows why so many die from it. While breast cancer is easily treatable if detected early enough, few Filipino women (it seems that they tend to go for regular detection procedures, either through breast self-exams, exams conducted by trained health personnel, or mammograms) only when it is too late for surgery or chemotherapy.

Women are dying from breast cancer not (we know of course) very just because of the disease itself, but because of lack of access to even the most basic health services.

In the case of cervical cancer, which kills more Filipinas each year than breast cancer, the situation is not much better. Pap smear, a simple and accurate method for detecting it, known as the "pap smear." And yet, while the pap smear has been around for so long, not even many Filipino women even know this procedure and the advantages to be gained from regular screening.

* * *

We all dream of a better world, but that better world will be possible only if we work hard for it.

Together, let us all dream and work for a world where every woman would be aware of breast cancer; where every woman would know how to conduct breast self-exam and afford regular mammograms; and would be able to access the treatment she needs.

Together, let us all dream and work for a world where every woman would be aware of cervical cancer and its causes; popularity the need for early detection and treatment. Know that some must says

Remedies for a chief exec's moral disability

THE CONSTITUTION provides that in case of permanent disability or the post of a sitting president, the vice president succeeds and shall serve the unexpired term. If the disability is only temporary, the vice president shall act as president while the disability lasts. Debatable is how to play it out disability.

James L. Sundquist, in his book "Constitutional Reform and Effective Government," talks of a deliberate kind of disability which he calls "moral disability." He explains that this occurs when a president loses the capacity to lead the country because of a scandal involving him, which may not be an impeachable offense. Resignation would be a constitutional alternative. But the law remains that it is a purely voluntary act.

A demand for the President to resign is at least a moral force which carries its legal compulsion. Against a strong willed President, it can achieve nothing except to divide and perhaps destroy the country. What do we do then with a president rendered in a considerable measure ineffective?

Sundquist notes that during the Watergate scandals, three amendments to the American Constitution were proposed.

The Bingham Resolution, which sought to authorize Congress to pass a law—by two-thirds majorities of both houses—calling a new presidential election whenever Congress perceives that the president has lost the people's trust to such an extent that he could no longer perform his duties. The president could not, in the special election, which could show whether or not he has retained or lost the confidence of the people. The president was meant to contest the impeachment process which, the bill's proponents argued, was dangerous because it would bring the government to a halt while the president was on trial.

The Green Resolution was substantially the same proposal. However, it provided that the full calling for a new election would not be submitted to the president for approval or disapproval if it is found that he had exercised his powers, failed to exercise his best, or exercised them illegally. The proposal allowed the president to run in the special election.

The Brass Resolution sought to permit Congress to remove the president by two-thirds majority vote of 67 persons of each house. However, as a deterrent to opportunistic partisan action, it provided that all seats in Congress as well as the vice-president and vice presidency be filled in a new election.

President Nixon resigned in 1974, and the issue of what to do with a president who refuses or resigns died a natural death. The Americans "trimmed in confidence that once again the system worked."

The Bingham, Green and Brass resolutions deserve serious study and consideration by us because of the situation we're in now.

—RALEIGH V. BRAMBLE
City Councilor,
Dumaguete City

Talking of martial law?

I MUST agree with the PDI's July 7 banner story: there are better leaders than President Macapagal-Arroyo.

That burning issue said, and considering that we are in democracy where the will of the majority has to be respected, we now need only three questions.

1. Who decides who will succeed President Arroyo? Sen. Aquilino Pimentel? Sen. Francisco Tatad? Sen. Fernando Poe Jr.? Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile? Some comedian come from? Can they really speak for the majority?

2. We have a Constitution that provides precisely for changing presidents. What's wrong with the legal and valid basis for scrapping the Constitution?

3. If we can do away with the Constitution, why are we celebrating Independence Day? Should we not logically do away with the legislature and judiciary also?

4. Have those advocating cross-legal steps considered what faces the country should their recommendation be followed? Who will administer the government? Who will collect taxes? Who will pay salaries and expenses? Who will protect the country and our people? Or do we leave it to presidential pretenders, others will be mandate and authority soon from? Why should we obey them or are we talking of martial law?

—BONIFACIO S. TIU JR.,
Unit 7b The Modern Studio
122 Valero St.,
Salcedo Village, Makati City

Grand derby

SINCE arriving in the Philippines more than three years ago, I have made an effort not to become a regular user of the subway. Having said so unbecoming, I particularly appreciate its world-class design and graphics. Your article deserves particular praise for the July 10 front page.

The graphic "National Grand Derby" is the most appropriate caption I have seen for a long time. As a devoted analyst of Philippine politics, I briefly considered actually framing it and hanging it in my office. But I thought it might not be a good idea as some of the political prisoners I depict in the graphic may choose to change their positions in the near future. (This would not surprise me.)

All this said, I encourage the INQUIRER to bring on an update of its "National Grand Derby" cartoon every year and a half.

—RONALD BERNABE,
Makati City

PRIZE cards for 'SONA: Where's SPAR picture in this time?

Who says GMA was impeached?

THERE is no exercise in the keystone push page story titled "House 'impeaches' Arroyo then grant cards for Sona," (PDI, July 6) that tells the reader clearly that the media identification cards issued by our office for the President's State of the Nation Address bear tracks that is no different from the previous Sonas.

The President's name has never been spelled out in the IDs as a means of confusion and protocol. While President Macapagal-Arroyo's image appeared as part of the design in 2002 and 2003, it was not carried in last year's IDs. Thus, the purely speculative claim of your story did a disservice to your readers and to the media.

—EMMANUEL A. ECHANIS,
deputy secretary general,
Public Relations

and Information Department,
concurrent director,
Media Affairs Service,
House of Representatives,
Quezon City

[THANK by my story. For instance, the President's photo published in the 2003 ID card distributed to the media.]

—MICHAEL LIM ICHIONG

The confession of Nehemiah

"THE NEHEMIAH 5 Challenge" and "The 5 o'clock High Prayer Crusade" are our response to the different and disgraceful situation our country is in. Started last June 23, we continue to call on everyone to take up this challenge.

This is not a call to take militant drastic ways political gymnastics, but we do call on everyone to make a stand—"Stand up and praise the Lord your God, who lives forever and ever" (Nehemiah 9:5).

The complaints generated by partisan shows, some hearings and rallies confounds us already confusing circumstances, further complicating our lives because of the sense of God or sensing His presence, after and in words in our midst. In response to all this, we propose the command of Psalm 46:10—"Be still, and know that I am God."

We have been overcome by a torrent of plain ridiculous nights of 9 o'clock or the following: Think (T) of God's love and faithfulness to us, Filipinos; Remember (R) the miracles He has done in our history; and Thank (T) God for His goodness and graciousness to our various backgrounds.

"The Nehemiah 5 Challenge" is from the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. Chapter 4-5 where Nehemiah, the engineer in the king of Persia, calls on all of Israel to prayer and confess their disobedience and rebellion against God. Under the leadership of his servant, they rebuilt the broken walls of the City of Jerusalem and undertook the task mentioned their nation.

We however this time in words your comments, stay this being given and honor to God. And for whatever good it may bring as our nation and people, may it personally challenge you to pray the confession of Nehemiah.

—BRO. ISABELO A. LOZADA, JR.,
Sacred Oak Metropolitan,
1018 Street, Sandoval City

'Impitsmento'

LIKE any citizen, I have been watching television shows and listening to radio programs discussing the alleged telephone conversations between Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Election Commissioner Atty. Augusto Lagumbay Gutierrez. In the process, I have heard public officials, resource persons, television talk show hosts, radio commentators, news reporters and other speakers repeatedly use words like "Ispeaker," "alemeron," "abakadaba," "telesis Ayia," "anumbya," "alternasible" and "kwatrabun." Earlier immortal offspring has been the word "impitsmento" which means "changing" or "forcing through" in newscasts, it could have been condemned as "trying hard."

With all due respect and apology I find the practice disappointing, debasing, cultivating, rendering it is acknowledged that Filipino, as a language, should be allowed to grow. But it should not be at a person who is speaking "i" or "e" to the English word.

I find it impossible to resist this urgent concern as this practice by the country's people seem to embroidered in a proceeding we might call "impitsmento."

—CERVINO CABAL,
Gumela St., Tahanan Village,
Parañaque City

Jaguar X-type car not issued by Philcomsat

OUR client, Enrique L. Lozada, personally came to us on July 12, 2005, to bring to our attention some matters pertaining to him that appeared in the Agustin's column in the July 1, 2005 issue of the business.

Agustin stated in his column that Lozada availed himself of a Philcomsat-paid Jaguar X-type car right after assuming his position in the Philcomsat board.

Lozada denies that he availed himself of a Philcomsat-paid Jaguar X-type car but was given the unit by the owner.

We have seen the documents that Lozada brought to prove that the Jaguar car that he owns has not been acquired through Philcomsat, and we are convinced of the authenticity of these documents. Among the documents shown to us by Lozada is a certification from the Philcomsat corporate secretary attesting that the company has never issued any Jaguar vehicle to Lozada.

Lozada wishes that the above clarifications be made by Agustin himself in our letters column or in the opinion section of the inquirer.

—ORTEGA, DEL CASTILLO, BAUTISTA, DEALCA, CALMA & CABANGUNAL,
Ayala Ave., 6th and 6th floors,
140 LP Leviste St., Salcedo Village,
Makati City

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Maaralin Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to fax. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The letter we will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Inglibre

Dear Readers. Sent in your comments, suggestions and views on today's issues or how it was delivered. Tell us about the news you are interested in and the things you want improved. Type your favorite newspaper last INQUIRER exactly as you write it, or you may send in 140 (Smart) or 2505 (Globe). Your letters/opinions are limited to the logic of each person.

Do you think the planned image makeover of President Gloria Arroyo into a friendlier, gentler president will work?

No. It hardly doesn't need a friendly or gentle president now. It needs a competent one who will see beyond herself & do reparation.
—jun sun-sui, makati

It will help but I prefer a contentious president. Reforms can't be wrong. It must be tough & strong! So we will kill a lot of crime soon. Hehe hee.
—rose locsin, 37

Image makeover can do anything if cover up, sanitized wrongdoing. Inauthentic FOR SURE!
—rose sae, 62, san juan, la union

Everything will work if other politicians could people cooperate with it provided coffee than clouding be a means.
—Adanza sarno, parañaque

Still wrong responsible crime. What we need is honest) pres. Then, the rest will be in honest) pres.
—Roman Wisenia, 43, Nueva Ecija

No, just 6 weeks of taxpayers money, why are we celebrities? Should we not logically do away with the legislature and judiciary also?

4. Have those advocating cross-legal steps considered what faces the country should their recommendation be followed? Who will administer the government? Who will collect taxes? Who will pay salaries and expenses? Who will protect the country and our people? Or do we leave it to presidential pretenders, others will be mandate and authority soon from? Why should we obey them or are we talking of martial law?

—BONIFACIO S. TIU JR.,
Unit 7b The Modern Studio
122 Valero St.,
Salcedo Village, Makati City

Anxiety is in the eye of the beholder.
—Jo. Ingles
—sheila martin, pangasinan

No, coz its no done at all. Epic wen si pres is her legs n her political critics, thus it worth glasses in an attempt 2 trick people.
—Jose L. Logelo, 53, sorsogon

After all these years she plans to have an image makeover? Don't you think that is a bit to chasing tail? & desperate?
—rose bridget nuti, 40, Ateneo city

Isn't it morning will always be a morning?
—Diamond, 20, cipar

No, si image makeover did not work na, and it will not work now, she will always b one arrogant and smirking woman.
—jenifer ampolos, 44, Bislig city

No, it never work. It will only hide it plaid with the lies we like see in palace of her, we have seen it and has no motive 2 years. So, it wont work, plz have patience & wait the last 2 of it. Besides, we hate dats like a change 2 look a good 2 spit on cupo.
—mel Garcia, 35, comelec city

Definitely not, being kept in public "image (LASA, "I)
—Gary Rodeo, 28, Cagayan de Oro City

Whatever makeover it do, majority Filipino wont believe anymore. President Arroyo, no matter to act...She made us unfortunate by sing down in politics. 4 the benefit of the majority of Filipinos.
—Reynaldo Go Jr. 36, Quezon City

For me, if no changing image makeover. No. 1 lord in land & lion hearts and hopes of a Filipino people.
—Dennis Vincent Jalubo, 19, Malolos City City

Lahh ANOMALYA SUBOL sa FILIPINO mayron, Ulyan mako PEKAY MILYON PESOS! SUBOSA ko! still hindi # FULL ID dead bones
—Ariel Alipao, 34, coco merchnt

It will work but not sure, all Filipinos remembered wat she did and our politicians' wat also thiswindow.
—jose noel v. Buhangan, 35, san pablo city

No, it will not work, cracked eyelid cheek cannot be broken no matter how many eyelids or cheek it, just will not do anything, considering that she people and not as a leader
—richard p cabrejuela, 27, san jose city

No and now did she is unable to resign. She is possible after resigning it bridge that she cannot 2 plus now whilst all given her marriage.
—Rocio Wild Carmen, 46, Bulacan

No didn't want na ng Lalog bayan ang sinasi kya ang bayat ngang gawin mag-image makeup
—Nb, cheryl Alvarez, 22, makati city

she what qualify 2 answr ani she is friendlier & gentler. hopefully not 2 criminals & cohorts.
—ronnie g. labbao, quezon city

I don't think it will work, people look at what's produced is going and no good governance. NOT at all hope 2.
—Mark Anthony Cosco, 24, makati

No reason, ang buntot dapat sa mga ng kabilihin ng maraming salamat ng buntot pa rin!
—Girl, Gumba, Pasig City

NO. APPLYING image makeover to a vulture DOESN'T MAKE IT look like a PIGEON. Plastic president should be MADE ALL SOFT AND CUTE!
—Wily Medina, 28, Baguio City

NO, for MAKEOVER must likely will NEED NEW ONE
—may p. Sabaybay-an, quezon city

No, to late some people think that a image makeover is either a plastic surgery.
—Alicia cualy, bataa, antique

Image make over? Wash! She think if I believe and look at the result. And add to the fact that people are skeptical towards her action.
—rosario qua, manila

I don't think it will work anymore even to her credibility out and out. Its very hard 2 restore & to amount of makeover can create it.
—Arsenio Pee Batista, 23, manila

Has planned makeover would just make her the epitome of hypocrisy!
—benjie ababao, 37, Agusan city

No. Knowing it all made of Silicone, if image of president will not change whatever she will do
—Hernandez Jose, 31, Aguilo City

any makeover partakes. Its any problems any patients. Regarde man ang mina, watch performing body!
—ramon g. labbao, quezon city

It will not work because many Filipinos do not trust her anymore.
—Sheila R. Esguerra, 26, Ilo Ilo Investor

NO, if people has love and tolerance when she hold 2 deliver after 6 years 4 Filipinos.
—Alda Estores, 56, Mandaue City

I hope we'll not go beside her make-up, add some color to her face & hair to love does her wonderful looks!
—Bettie Abang, 33, cotabato city

I think it is not good if work anymore bcoz majority of the population does not approve. She's elected by the makeover people have lost confidence of people, and she is not doing it for the country.
—Lupiluarias, 23, Cotabato City

As a member the present political crisis demands honest learning and makeover. LIKE that president leadership by example & should not tolerate corruption which is full all over the country. As a member, she should think of having good government as a legacy.
—Ching Plaza, 45, Butuan City

No, the planned image makeover won't work...Just remember she is, but should be the effort in pursuing her objectives.
—Antonio Sindelar, 18, Parañaque City

Across the NATION

MILF extends deadline for Abu hunt

MILF, gov't talks in KL postponed by Malaysia

COTABATO CITY—The Malaysian government postponed the roundtable discussion between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which was supposed to be held in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal yesterday told the Inquirer the rebel group received the notice of postponement last Friday.

Iqbal said there was no reason given for the postponement.

"Usually the Malaysian government informs us if the peace talks will push through or not. Here we are days ahead of the scheduled meeting, but (on Friday), we received notice of the postponement," Iqbal said.

During the scheduled discussion on July 25-26, government and MILF negotiators were expected to discuss the proposed 3-year cease-fire, ongoing firefights between the two forces, and the return to a federal state.

Ed Kalada, MILF spokesperson, said Malaysia delays indicate somewhere the talks would go haywire.

"We will just see. We will just wait," he said.

During the June 23 exploratory talks held in the Malaysian capital, the government and the MILF noted satisfaction with the implementation of the cease-fire agreement signed by the Organization for Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Government forces pursuing Abu Sayyaf bandits in the hinterlands of Maguindanao were given another 72 hours to launch offensives against the bandit group without jeopardizing the Mindanao peace process.

The 72-hour extension was given by the government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (Ahjag) for the soldiers to capture Janjalani alias Khadaffy Janjalani and his followers.

Lawyer Abdul Dataya, MILF Ahjag chair, said both the MILF and the government panels agreed to extend the "vacation" of MILF rebels from Camp Bushir in Maimbung, Maguindanao to give government soldiers ample time to pursue the Abu Sayyaf bandits and his men.

The extension would end midnight of July 27.

Deadline

"Until such time, the 500-man MILF fighters who manned their camp would return from their vacation," Dataya said in a telephone interview on Monday.

Maj. Gen. Aguinaldo Dema-ala, 6th Infantry Division chief, said the unfavorable weather condition in Maguindanao has affected the movement of ground troops, majority of whom were "green" of Bil Ill Sukkanan Fisrtcis in Zamboanga and Basilan.

Giving way

"If we continue the operation, hopefully the government would end up with Janjalani and his men in no hands," Dema-ala told reporters.

On July 21, the MILF agreed in opposition to troops away from the target of the ongoing operations, and will remove its fire base in order as the operation is terminated.

The separation of MILF troops was witnessed by the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team (IMT) headed by Maj. Gen. Dato' Zulkifli Bin Mohmad Zain, who has been getting weekbabs and praises for his active and nonpartisan role in the implementation of the ceasefire agreement between the MILF and the government.

The IMT, unless extended by the government and MILF peace panels, will end its term of duty in Mindanao by October this year.

Eid Kabalu, speaking for the MILF, said the MILF forces are not "physically" involved in the operation.

Goodwill

"Our turning out of Camp Bushir is a gesture of goodwill in the peace process," he said. He hopes the government will reciprocate by withdrawing its troops in Talayan, Guindulungan, and South Uzi, all in Maguindanao.

Thousands of civilians have evacuated to safer grounds at a time when their upland rice are due for harvesting.

Most of the evacuees are now housed in schools and barangay halls in Shak in Guindulungan, Lambayao, Alan, Midtimbang, and Talitai in Talayan, and those from the interior parts of have been housed and South Upi have evacuated to Dalicon and Timanan. *Edwin G. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

MILF leaders hold a State of Bangsamoro Address as they voice out their grievance against the government in a rally in Tagaig, Some of their members in Mindanao have chosen to take up arms instead.

Leaders seek ways to carry out no torture policy in town

BAWA, Quezon—Multi-sectoral representatives here held a round-table meeting on Friday and discussed ways to implement the torture-free zone resolution adopted by the local municipal council to address the escalating human rights violations in the area.

Atty. Conrado Ismael Elleza, author of Municipal Resolution No. 109-S. 2000, said the meeting was a necessary step to forming a local working group, which will be composed of local government officials, police, military, church people and nongovernmental organizations.

Elleza, a member of Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, said he believed that involving law enforcement operatives and local government officials in the working group would strengthen the mechanisms of check and balance, and would ensure that human rights are protected and respected.

According to Jennifer Bevda, DYAB-Southern Luzon regional coordinator, they had already documented five cases of human rights violations of hundreds of individuals, most of whom are peasants.

The cases range from torture, illegal arrests and detention and displacement of families due to the government's counter-insurgency operations, Bevda said.

He said the round-table discussion was held not only to ensure the implementation of the municipal resolution but also to educate local government officials, especially those involved in law enforcement and prosecution of human rights.

"We hope that by educating the government and military officials, preventive measures could be instituted so as to stop the practice of torture and other forms of human rights violations from happening," Bevda said.

The meeting was attended by local officials, police, military, religious and different nongovernment organizations.

In a related development, the indigenous tribes in the Sierra Madre ranges in General Nakar, Quezon appealed to New People's Army rebels and government forces to temporarily spare communities or peace zones after a recent incursion to their place left many of the residents in fear, houses destroyed and relief goods and farm implements ransacked.

In a statement sent to the inquirer, the northern Quezon tribesmen known as Agta (Alabaan ng mga Grupong Taong Katutubo sa Sagunanggol sa Lupang Ninuno) asked the NPA to stop making their communities as places of sovereignty and for the military to also cease conducting patrols in their area. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

3,000 DA men protest delay in ₱2,000 allowance

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The ₱2,000 monthly compensation allowance of some 3,000 Department of Agriculture employees in Central Luzon has not been paid since January, DA employees said.

Cesar Rodriguez, DA regional director, said the amounts should come from the local government units (LGUs) since the 300 employees and programs were devolved to them in 1993 under the Local Government Code (Republic Act 7160).

Rodriguez said local officials have even signed memorandum agreements to support the transportation expenses of agriculture personnel assigned to the Farming Management Act program, adding that it would have been different if the MOU heads were directly involved in the hunt for Janjalani.

"The result would have been different," Rodriguez said.

About two battalions of soldiers backed by helicopter gunships have been pursuing about 25 bandits led by Janjalani since July 1.

The names of Jean Henry Janjalani and Cotte Isnab Magalasan have been included in the coverage of the operation, in addition to the names of Dulu Odin Hassan, Tabayan, Gumbedungan, and South Uzi, all in Maguindanao.

Thousands of civilians have evacuated to safer grounds at a time when their upland rice are due for harvesting.

Most of the evacuees are now housed in schools and barangay halls in Shak in Guindulungan, Lambayao, Alan, Midtimbang, and Talitai in Talayan, and those from the interior parts of have been housed and South Upi have evacuated to Dalicon and Timanan. *Edwin G. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

The complainants, he said, should be able to distinguish between the LGU-subsidized allowances and the incentive that the regional DA office provides.

The DA gives a ₱2,000 monthly perk to those whose programs show good results. *Rosalie Ocfemia, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Court won't stop sale of dam by LGUs

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—A judge here denied a petition to stop the impending sale by the provincial government of a foreign-financed hydroelectric power plant to Alliance Eurasiatic team, about 350 feet from here.

Judge Jose Godofredo Hasi, executive judge of the province's south regional trial court district, set aside the plea of California Energy-Caucasian Water and Energy Co. (CE-CWEC), to prevent the July 26 auctioned of 70 pieces of property within the Caucasian multi-purpose irrigation and power project (CIMPP).

The decision was dated July 19 but was released only on Thursday.

Hasi said the CE-CWEC failed to prove that it had a clear right to seek protection from the courts to stop the disputed sale.

"Judicial relief [such as a temporary restraining order or TRO] may be given only when the applicant has shown a clear and positive right calling for judicial protection," he said, quoting a Supreme Court decision.

The lawyers could not be linked to contract lawyer Linda Castillo, CE-CWEC vice president for corporate and legal affairs. She did not answer calls to her home and phone.

The CE-CWEC on Tuesday filed a suit for the issuance of an injunction and TRO to stop the provincial government from proceeding with the scheduled public auction of the CIMPP project site.

The auction is part of the local government's effort to raise 14 pieces of CIMPP property to collect the firm's unpaid taxes amounting to ₱20.17 million. *Melvin Gascon and Rose Mallari-Flores, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Anti-Sona protests spread outside Metro Manila

A BOY in sought on a rally in Baguio City by his parents appear unworrying but enjoying the protests.

A PCGR emerge at mask making surfaces in Isabela province where a small group also rallied.

A RADER protest rally is held in Davao City, where militants gathered more individuals and made louder noise.

ARTISTS on to make their presence felt in the Davao City rally.

DIFFERENT villains turn up at the Davao City rally comparing for attention.

EARLIER in the day, police and military officers in Davao City put on happy faces in a show of unity for press and public.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, July 24, 2001
club tv
Saturday_8pm
feat. the_vibe
ABC
TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat
alas-10 ng gabi na!
Tuwing Huwebes
Ang kabalitaan
Cheri Mercado
INQ INQ TV TV
ABC

People outside Metro speak

AS PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo prepared to report to the people in her first State of the Nation Address since her vote-questioned victory in the presidential elections of 2004, the Inquirer sought out news and sources in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, who would be otherwise going about their day-to-day business, for their opinions.

Some shared the anger and frustration of the country's critics, others sympathized with her while still some couldn't care less.

Here are their views.

"She mentioned a lot of good things but she failed to give hope to the lowly government employees." –Herne Pinero, 56, government employee in Negros Oriental

"Her speech is nothing but a repeat from the previous years. If [the Arroyos] promised will never materialize." –Joel Capacidad, 36, hot metal operator in Roxas City, Capiz

"Wala kami labo-labo sa mga nasabi niya. Ok lang kung whatever she is saying, but are most of her promises." –Prudencia Rose Borja, street vendor at the Roxas City public market

"She's applauded for his well-proclaimed infrastructures, but what is there to be happy about? Inspite of the billions she has, there is still enormous poverty. Extreme change is needed." –Agnes Ignacio Dimaano, 40, SOD worker, Iloilo City

"The longer she stays in power, the more she becomes a hated girl. She is now in favor of massive change and a shift to pro-farmer system of government." –A young, lawyer who asked not to be identified, Iloilo City

"She did not touch the questions on her leadership. She often applauded but but there were many protesters outside. (the Inquirer Complex)." –Leticia, 60, vendor in the Lesbo, Iloilo City

"I liked her speech. I think despite of every thing, she should be given a chance to continue the service for she started because she might succeed." –Henry Gutierrez, 37, janitor, Bacolod City

"I hope the changes President Gloria Arroyo must will solve our problems." –Ramon Cadorayo, 58, an engineer from Tacloban Leyte

"Wa'pay ko nasumbalan ti dol ant understood ang lang?" –Lolito Diebon, 45, business, Ilocos City, Ilocos

"I watched her address last night of the Nation Address. But I feel she is not again sincere on what she was saying. And she did not mention anything about the [Garci] tape. I was disappointed." –Ma. Bella Ayuyao, government employee, Naitbac City, Leyte

"I wanted almost a day but they ignored me once in 20 minutes. I wish everyone will have a job with her economic reforms." –Nicanor Carbonilla, 45, shoe maker in Kauswagan Lanao

"Wala akong pakialam. Her statements have no impact in our lives. It won't solve our problem which is poverty." –Rodita Bayo, 63, scavenger/food vendor in Cebu City

"Sorry to the President. Honestly has the vision, she has the talent in governing this country. I would not understand why other people wanted to oust her." –Rene Cajandida, staff nurse in Cebu City

"Praise the Lord. She was enlightened by the Holy Spirit when she delivered the State. I was, chest up and clapped my hands because of her words addressed to her sincerity." –Jovanna Esparcia, 47, owner of an eatery in Cebu City

"Sorry dami lang ni Gloria ang nagpanda pang dana Anak. I pointed that she was the only one who would benefit from the promises she made in her State. It was all about promises, all about nagpapanda [scoundrel]. She never discussed the issues against her, like election fraud." –Jun Tacdoron, 38, theatrical engineer, Bacolod [Ilocos, Cagayan, Iloilo, Baguio City]

"President Macapagal-Arroyo's State was just like an ordinary speech of an ordinary politician calling for unity and promising better income, which our both old feuds to achieve. Just like last year, she again mentioned Charter change and fair shift to parliamentary. It's as if government's that she did not mention it somewhere in there." –Joselito Fuente, local government employee, Angeles City

"Ginis debated the political tension in the country. Hindi niya nagsalita ng masama o labas sa mga nasa upuan ... Sabagay, bunga ang unang taon sa at all your family agreed ang mahirap pagbuhayin ng pamilya ng isa lang." –Permanente Bonalos, 58, driver, Baliuag, Bulacan

"A change in the political system is one the answer to our problems. What we need is a change in the character among our political leaders. Those working in government must start to educate themselves about what public service is all about so that our country will move forward." –Mar Galeb, employee, Ilocos Norte provincial government

"It was arguably the most applauded State but it was just a show of force of her political supporters. There was not much meat for her speech, especially those concerning poor Filipinos." –Jojo de Guzman, president, Rizal Rice Price Club Cabanatuan City

"SONA did not address the issues being hashed at her, like 'jueteng' and wiretapping [controversy]. She merely mentioned some accomplishments but did not discuss the way some of the critics, like daughter Dr. Vin Gloriani recently to stop the up, position from wrestling her out to address the urgent issues of the nation." –Luddie Andaya, businessman, Concepcion, Tarlac

"The people know the truth." –Reginald Upaldon, Aeta-Ga-Dumagat Bataan spokesperson, Dapat, Subic

"Her State contained political stroke to appease the growing voice of dissent. There were no solutions offered to the problem of an sagging economy." –Arnold Bay, manager cable television service in, Ilocos City of Ilocos, Ilocos Sur

"It is refreshing the time when she talked about Charter change and parliamentary system. It's equal to me that datumis as from the real issues. When she said that problem has degenerated, what was her sole to be degenerated? There are more important topics of the day. When she mentioned that the economy is [only 6] [the 6], we all know it's not a true economy." –Gino Mirasol, lawyer, Baguio City

"I do not believe in anything that GMA said. It is is true that her administration had done something for the infrastructure, then why are we even poorer than we used to? Only the rich benefit from the kind of reforms that her government is doing. Even the expanded value added tax is not effective enough from because, as we all know, taxes only go to the pockets of politicians. Life in this country is frustrating." –Jaker Dalicanton, 43, retail vendor, Dagupan, Pangasinan

"As expected what she said was as part of a grand plan to deceive the people of what really is happening. It was never an address to the chance of the people who have been calling for her resignation or ouster." –Lawyer Carlos Isagani Zarate, convener of the Union of People's Lawyers of Mindanao

"The [President] did well in her delivery. The congratulate her. Though Mikmiks postponed the protest rally, we are ready and we will be coming out the 25 percent." –Edi Kabalo, KMU spokesperson

"It's good that she [President Arroyo] endorsed Charter change. Now, the ARMM can pursue amendments of RA 9054 the law that created the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao." –Muslimin Sema, ANGP secretary general and mayor of Cotabato City

"Parliamentary and federal system, what's that? President Arroyo can call for any change of government, it's up to her. But if she really loves this country, she should step down now. With all those big rallies against her administration, it is obvious that the people are sore fed up. They don't want her to lead the country anymore." –Fr. Fernandito, entrepreneur Zamora City

"President Arroyo's State was mainly up of patriotic words but devoid of substance and meaning to the line of the present condition of hard living. I expect no change, no improvement to the plight of common Filipinos. Oil price hikes will continue, the cost of food in the market will go higher while the [once salary will still remain low. Former rallies will continue, that's for sure." –Ronnie Ramoso, charcoal vendor, Laoag City

"Well, not any popular issues have surprising people. Jero she did not discuss long one-way detachment up multistage at Ayong once telegraphing problems. She's the million jobs, even [one job] that no face value." –Prof. Oscar Evangelista, former OP Assn of Student Affairs and Pakistani Community Media Council chair

"Nothing's new, it's just a more recorded piece of a State of a Nation address that I've heard since the assumed the presidency. But I'm impressed that she did not mentioned about resigning from her office." –Gilbert Rabino, part-time professor, Aquinas University

"Welcome ang good statements ng pagkamatatag from of government because it will give importance to the local government units and it will be less costly in electing officials. But, the question is, 'is it doable at the time being, in terms of financial and [political] natural circumstances?'" –Harold Bernard, chairman of Albay Chamber of Commerce and Industry and former vice president and board member of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry

"Let us support the President's program of action so that [hopefully] we move forward to country better life and overcome the economic difficulties in the future." –retired PNP Brig.Gen regional director Rodrigo Mompondo

"She has done that Iloilo has come to par with accomplishing national upheaval, such facts should act as a wake-up call to the opposition that unless it is united and with one voice, GMA will finish her term. It should not be a surprise to GMA confident that the opposition will not recover from its discordant state because doubtful issues based on lessons, it can resurrect and push for GMA's ousted concern from power." –Amorito Balcueva Peralta, legal counsel of retired Chief Supt. Rodrigo Mompondo

"Hindi niya ang mga sinasabi niya. Marami pa rin ang walang trabaho. Ang mahal ng mga bilihin. As expected she had spun all the promises! In short, she was just aiming for a solution that to us can create another problem. She is focusing more on Charter, which is unrelated for the things." –Rosalie Lajato, professor, Palawan State University

"Her State performance is good but far from her performance as governor[s] leader. In my own good but far timing is bad." –Norman Nieva, chief of worker orders Jose Occidental, Mindoro

"I am not satisfied. She did not answer the issue of extension in the minds of the people. It is very short here mind. Considering the effort in the preparation for the occasion." –Lucille Bacay, teacher, Ilocos, Oriental Mindoro

Jeffri T. Mallari Jr., Judith F. Torres, Michael R. Sanchez, Madonna T. Virola, Bernabe G. Pineda and Gil Francis Arevalo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Audrye Galeza, Villamor Visaya Jr., Yolanda Adalla-Puertas, Eva Montoya, Ruark Cimatu and Cristina Arradaza, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; and Jim Maliq, Carmelito Francisco and Jonathan Fragas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Carla P. Gomez, Ma. Dina Antiporda, Felipe Celero, Alyn L. Mal, Jose A. Bolarin, Florence Hilotin-Sagadraca and Jose Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau and PIA Mindanao Bureau

HILITSHTS drag a Gloria look-alike in a rally in Baguio City

EFFIGY-making was the fad in the Davao City rally

VENDORS say their piece in the Baguio City rally

A WOMAN vendor stands her ground at the Baguio City rally

#HATEYOU: a take-off sign in the Baguio City rally only to possess could answer

PROTESTERS couldn't yet pass guards blocking their way in Cebu City.

LISTENING to her sister, President Arroyo (left) observes with former President Ramos after her Sona.

(RIGHT) FOR CRYING OUT LOUD: Senate President Franklin Drilon appears to be overcome by some emotion while Dr. Nereza makes like a couple. This is going on behind the President's back (below).

(LEFT) The Perfect host to the President, House Speaker Jose de Venecia (2d) fix the President's coat as well as her pride for wishing an inter-faith conference at the United Nations.

DELIGHTING in the pleasure of their company, Ms. Arroyo doesn't mind being mobbed by an adoring throng after delivering her Sona.

SOUR NOTE: Rep. Manuel "Way Kurot" Zamora, who sees a plant nursery near the Batasang Pambansa, distributes ceremonial seedlings to his colleagues, the meaning of which was still unclear at press time.

THE DAY OF THE SONA

TALKING STILL. No matter the differences, party-list Representatives Teddy Casiño and Satur Ocampo take it from their Speaker.

THE UNITE open on Monday morning the second regular session of the 13th Congress with the National Anthem. From left are Senators Alfredo Lim, Jamby Madrigal and Pimpin Lucas.

PINNING hopes on making a little on the side is fund-process cafes.

DOWN UNDER. Dec. 4C the Philippine Consulate in Sydney, Australia, on Monday, protesters call for Ms. Arroyo's resignation.

HEAVY heavily guarded Sona. An array of policemen block anti-GMA protesters as they inch toward the Sandiganbayan building, which is near to the Batasang Pambansa.

[LOT #4 TIME for Sona, the protest rally is held before the Batasang Pambansa complex in Quezon City. ALEX NINO LOPEZ]

TRUCKLOADS of demonstrators arrive at the rally site on Commonwealth Avenue, at least 200 meters away from the Sandiganbayan, which would have been closer—but not quite—to the object of their protest. NOEL CELIS

Opposition mounts biggest rally yet

From page A1

decided manipulating the ballot.

"This is the biggest Sona rally I have ever seen," Pena, 67, who has been living beside the Rizal Memorial Hall for five years, told the Inquirer. He used old green binoculars he borrowed from a neighbor just to see the rear of the rally. He did not use it.

The protesters filled up the northbound side of the main thoroughfare leading to the House of Representatives from the Capitol Science Subdivision beside Ever Gotesco to as far back as Don Lino St. from Mindanaoan.

All major roads leading to the building were blocked and traffic reversed. Security of the House was reinforced with steel containers, concrete blocks and barbed wire.

The protesters were a mix of left-wing groups and supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada and the late actor Fernando Poe Jr., Mr Arroyo's closest rival in the presidential election.

Crowds isolated

There were actually two anti-Arroyo demonstrations—the huge rally organized by the militant Bayan), Akbayan, Bayan Muna (Bayan) and the United Opposition from the mall to the Monument and the smaller gathering by the university population (about 10,000 strong) in front of the subdivision.

The first group of the Labor ng Bansa marched about 5,000 just before Mr Arroyo delivered her Sona.

The two rallies were separated by a 30-meter space under the overpass in front of the mall, each of them pushing their sound trucks and cars across the massive underpass their crowds.

A third rally was mounted by about 8,000 supporters of Mr Arroyo at the Commission on Audit building, more than 500 meters away from the protesters.

Despite the suspension of classes, an estimated 11,000 students and teachers from different public schools, colleges and universities joined the protest.

The Youth Demanding for Arroyo's Resignation (Youth Dare) said some 10,000 students from the University of the Philippines, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Ateneo, La Salle, University of Santo Tomas, University of the East, Adamson University, Trinity College and other schools, as well as other youth groups, joined the protest.

Street classes

The students huddled in "street classes" to discuss the "real state of the nation."

At the rally, a rapid song blared from speakers mounted on trucks: "Take president, your days are numbered."

PNP brass band eases tension at the barricades

By Yuk Carvosa

At 11 AM barricades held, a brass band plays on.

Complete with musicians taking care of soup outside, the Philippine National Police dogged the road leading to the Batasang Pambansa with confident vim, staring down the protesters barbed wire fences and concrete barriers to keep protestors at bay during President Macapagal-Arroyo's fifth and perhaps most watched State of the Nation Address.

Weaving street marchers and yesterday's blockade put up by the PNP reminded them of the security cordon around the legislative building during the October 2003 state visit of US President George W. Bush.

"I've been marching in Luneta since 1986. So I don't mind [the police] using concrete or wire barrier," said Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño.

Sr. Carl Anthony Ala, spokesperson for the Batasang Magbabatid ng Pilipinas, the one of more hardcore and police barricades encased the "Sona-hinto" of the Arroyo presidency.

The barriers effectively limited the advance of anti-Arroyo groups only up to the Ever Gotesco Mall area.

To get any nearer Batasan, the protesters would have to get through a first line of anti-riot police, then a "buffer zone" or empty stretch of road of about 100 meters," three alternating layers of barbed wire and concrete dividers, and another row of water containers on both sides of the road.

Behind the vans and trucks waited another line of policemen, and still behind them was about seven fire trucks with their water cannons ready.

But oddly, perhaps the most puzzling sight in the police formation was an ambulance.

Classes

At the makeshift command center headed by Vidal Quezol, the National Capital Region Command chief, members of the PNP Band from Camp Crame played familiar classics and contemporary pieces—almost oblivious to the antigovernment protesters massing several meters away.

The band sat in a security cut at the corner of Don Mariano Marcos Ave. and Don Lino St., where the police outfits drove out leftist protesters from Bantayan who had camped out on the spot the night before.

There's music to fill the air so there will not have a hostile atmosphere, Quezol said.

"The band was there to soothe the nerves of the [protesters] and the police. We want to start the event smiling, and we did smile also," Quezol said.

At the PNP, only two objectives were met. "To allow the President to fulfill her duty and deliver the Sona and to allow protesters to express their opinion and disperse from the joint session of Congress peacefully," Quezol said.

Quezol said the President "commended the PNP for a job well done."

He noted that this was the first time that the PNP came up with such a tactic—admit no doubt cannot be found in any armed control manual.

And "true enough," the day ended with no major violence incident, he said. There were no reported arrests in connection with the rally, either.

Quezol thanked his men for "exercising maximum tolerance" and the rally organizers for being "responsible and calm."

But he made special mention of the band leader and road-runner police officer Eric Espina.

Up to 6,000 policemen were mobilized to secure Commonwealth Avenue and other roads leading to the Batasan complex. *With reports from Jayson C. Ely*

Makabuhayan ng Pilipinas, Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño, Akbayan party-list Rep. Risa Hontiveros also went up the makeshift stage accusing her entire Filipinasan goon, she said she came to the rally to hear the real Sona, the situation of the poor.

The Labor ng Mata, which claims to consist of more than 96 organizations, is pressing for a "transitional revolutionary council." Big statements at the rally read: "Sagutin Ginoong Gloria (Change the ethics system)."

The group is not satisfied with only the ouster of Mr Arroyo, said Francisco "Soxlong" Nemenzo Jr., dean of the group and former University of the Philippines president.

"We are pushing for a transitional revolutionary council [to be composed of] representatives from major sectors that have been brought down the regime of Mr Arroyo," he said.

The council will, in the meantime, "set aside provisions of the Constitution to make it possible to institute social reforms." He said that before having an election, "there must be some fundamental reforms."

Tension

Tension rose when the group met solid and armed barring access at the police station at about 2:30 p.m. Minutes later, several protesters started pushing the three lines of policemen blocking the group.

Policemen slowly moved back as the protesters pressed forward inch by inch, their arms pushing louder and louder. Gaining momentum, the protesters walked past the Our Lady of Mercy School. Many cars parked in front were soon smashed by the crowd.

The policemen retreated. They allowed the protesters to walk near the parish, reaching the barbed wire barricades the police had set up across the road.

But when the protesters reached the barricade, they started throwing stones. Some of them pushed the concrete trellis blocks as they yelled at the policemen. *With reports from Alexis Pagsuyoin and Ed Diaz*

Protest rained out across the nation

From page A1

carrying an air rifle near the rally site.

Caravan to Kalibo

In the capital town of Kalibo in Aklan, 2,000 protesters held a rally near the Plaridel Park.

Members of transport groups brought around 60 tricycles and 20 jeepneys in a caravan from Numancia town to Kalibo.

Around 1,000 protesters marched in the main streets of Roxas City in Capiz before holding a rally at the Plaza Roxas.

Another 200 led by the International Movement for Justice and Peace and priests of the Philippine Independent Church joined the rally in the capital town of San Jose, Antique.

Rain forced protesters in diocese in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, at least 5,000 members of the Labor ng Mata had gathered for a march but a downpour scuttled them and only 500 made it to the City Hall, police said.

Rain also broke up a march of between 5,000 and 8,000 members of the Negros Movement for Moral Regeneration, but 2,000 of them made it to the plaza.

Transport strikes

A strike called by the Federation of Bacolod City Drivers Associations was heavily felt.

The daylong protest by Naghalalaingang Tsuper sa Bagito and Alliance of Transport Organizations Members Janio Cebu City failed to cripple public transportation in Cebu City and Metro Cebu.

Two groups demanding the Arroyo resignation were forced to delay their rally for more than an hour due to the heavy downpour in Cebu City.

Numbering 500 to 700, protesters belonging to the Ubata Step Down Movement (USM), composed of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and its affiliated organizations, paraded from the Fuente Osmeña but police blocked their way to the Capitol ground.

Music blaring from loudspeakers drowned out anti-Arroyo speeches.

Rain delayed the caravan of the Labor ng Mata, composed of the Akbayan, Sanlakas and the other affiliate groups.

Only 600 protesters made it to Colon street from where they proceeded to the Malacañang at Bagbo near the Mactan port, where they hurled an Arroyo effigy.

Rain failed to stop 1,000 protesters led by Bayan from Mindanao Avenue and Visayas Avenue Boulevard in Tacloban City, Leyte.

At about 3 p.m., the protesters held a torch parade in Benigno Aquino Avenue, Real Street, Zamora Boulevard, Veteran Avenue and Quezon Boulevard. There, the group held a cultural program where they expressed their grips against the administration through short drama presentations and songs.

Some 200 members of the Freedom from Debt Coalition and the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines held separate protest actions in Tacloban.

Gloria Step Down Group

In Davao City, at least 3,000 protesters from North Cotabato and the Davao provinces under the coalition Gloria Step Down Movement (GSDM) held a rally at the Rizal Park.

At the Freedom Park, at least a thousand protesters belonging to the Labor ng Masa gathered to also call for the resignation of the President and Vice President Noli de Castro.

In General Santos City, some 700 Bayan militants braved rain to demonstrate their protest against a "bogus" President.

In Cagayan de Oro City, several thousand protesters from all over Northern Mindanao gathered in the Divisoria district where they held a rally. At least 500 farmers from Bukidnon joined the rally despite the heavy rain.

In Butuan City, some 4,000 protesters marched around the city's main thoroughfares in the afternoon but no Arroyo effigy was burned.

Luzon rallies

Police also reported small protests in San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan and in Cainta City in Rizal but Palleonsoy seized 10 "pill box" bombs from the Bulacan protesters.

Small protests of several hundreds were reported in major cities in Luzon but there were no untoward incidents.

Police stopped 700 farmers from barricading the North Luzon Expressway gates.

Following a no-permit, no-rally policy, some 200 amateur police blocked the Ortigas stretch of the Cagayan Sen. Fernando Olongapo Road leading to the NLEx and stalled traffic for an hour.

"Clearly, this is a repression of our constitutional rights to assemble and express grievances," said Antonio Bisquil, spokesperson of the regional Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya, as policemen pushed the protesters out of the highway.

Ernesto Diego of the Pambansang Kampanyon ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan said the police stopped his contingent from Nueva Ecija and Bangsamoro from leaving the Don gates in Malolos, Bulacan.

The provincial contingents of Bayan were through what looked like obstacles courses, according to its Central Luzon chair, Bonnie Hilomen.

Those from Tarlac, Nueva Ecija and Pangasinan were blocked more than five times as they traversed the old Macarthur Highway, Nolasco said.

In Baguio City, officials of the party-list group Bayan Muna said Mr Arroyo had effectively eliminated herself from the public's account for the end state of the nation.

The rally got barred about 200 members of the Coalition Peoples Alliance (CPA), Oyayo Kadamay, Bilisang Mayo Uno, Youth Demanding Arroyo's Ouster (Youth Dare) and the Gays and Lesbians for the Immediate Ouster of GMA (Gala GMA) at the Igorot Park in Baguio.

Barred and assigned policemen belonging to the United Cordillera Party and representatives of the People's Movement against Poverty also joined the protest.

In Isabela, at least 100 members of militant and farmers groups converged at the Bonifacio Freedom Park in Bagao town to demand the resignation of Mr Arroyo and De Castro.

In Ilocos Sur, at least 500 members of various groups staged a protest in Candon to call for the ouster of Mr Arroyo.

Another rally organized by students and youth groups was staged in Dipan City.

In Ilocos Norte, some 50 members of militant women's and farmers' group massed up in front of the provincial capitol in Laoag City to call for the resignation of Ms Arroyo.

Quezon protests

A group of militant workers from the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino in Southern Tagalog held a protest caravan from Candelaria town in Quezon to the capital, Lucena City, aboard 10 vehicles and several motorcycles.

Ronnie Luna, chair of BMP-ST, said the protest was a manifestation that people wanted Mr Arroyo ousted.

Another 500 protesters from the Akbayan party-list group staged a one-minute "die-in" in Candelaria's main street. Students joined the protest by blocking their homes.

In Cavite, 500 protesters from the Partido ng Manggagawa and Alyansa ng Mamamayan sa Kabite (Mahabol) held a rally and noise barrage.

In San Pablo and Calamba cities in Laguna, rowdy students and urban poor activists took to the streets, bearing placards saying "Die to GMA, Pls to Noli."

In Legazpi City, at least 150 members of Bayan Bicol and other militant groups had a motorcade rally from Daraga town to the Pinaglabanan Shrine in the city proper despite the rain.

About 200 protesters belonging to Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela participated in a rally in Plaza 15 Martires in Naga City, Camarines Sur. *Reports from Nestor B. Burgos Jr., Carla B. Gomez, Ramonito Magallanes and Joey A. Gabieta, Phil Hayan Bureau; Anthony E. Alladin, Bobadilla Pevuca, Aubrey M. Rapsing, Frondoza A. Quijano, Angelie Z. Zenia, Grace Gamal-Alliante and Audrey Mullere, Phil Mindanao Bureau; Sherrie Ann Torres-Tupas and Carmela Reyes, Phil Central Luzon Desk; Villamor Visaya Jr., Leonelo Bocboc Jr., Fharen Catherine Benitez-Galasa and Cristina Arnaldo, Phil Northern Luzon Bureau; and Bobby T. Mallari Jr., Michael B. Jamias and Juan Escandor Jr., Phil Southern Luzon Bureau*

Drilon-GMA encounter ...

From page A1

Senator President Franklin Drilon as the portly lawmaker appeared on the TV screen.

"Pinatawanan" her audience, drawing laughter from fellow entrepreneurs and perhaps echoing the reaction of many who saw Drilon and President Macapagal-Arroyo shake hands as part of the Asena formalities.

Drilon, the highest official to participate in Mr Arroyo's resignation, easily was the second most watched figure at the annual event.

As the Western applause were at their noisiest somewhere in Quezon City, clerks watched with amusement as TV cameras caught Drilon being reduced to a glum figure in having Tagalog used refusing to join in the comedy of applause marking the President's speech.

Sore loser

"Hay nak (how true)!" another salesman said of Drilon, reportedly when the Senate president's moral came in sharp contrast to that of his "sore loser." Speaker Jose de Venecia, who gave standing ovations to Mr Arroyo's Asena, especially on the issue of Charter change.

But at least Mr Arroyo and Drilon shook hands before and after the fast delivered her piece—two flowing yet telling movements of "phanikan (fake civility)," as the senior clerks put it.

The small gathering in front of the TV set also observed that the President, unlike in her first four Aseans, looked "buggared" and appeared to put in some effort in her smile.

Drilon earlier said at the opening of the Senate session that people would expect an "independent" Senate as Mr Arroyo faced impeachment.

"I appeal to all those who wield power: do not subvert our democratic processes; do not subvert the truth. Our people will not allow this," he said.

"We assure everyone that in the second regular session of the 14th Congress, our people will continue to see an independent Senate that is even more resolute in the pursuit of economic, political and social reforms," Drilon said.

In the absence of any challenge, yet, he remained calmly unmoved as Senate president.

Senators Manuel Villar and Miriam Defensor Santiago, contenders for Drilon's post, have not manifested the 13 votes needed to censure him following his withdrawal of support from Mr Arroyo on July 6 in the tackle-to-take-by-bar resignation-versus-moral-denial allegations.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr and the filing of an impeachment complaint against Mr Arroyo would spur the Senate to unity.

But Pimentel said the Senate would continue to be the "vanguard of democracy."

"It will continue to promote the democratic ideals we hold dear to and shepherd the institutions of our country," Drilon said.

Working as one

He said the Senate responded to the fiscal crisis in the first regular session by working as one for the passage of the "six" crises, the fiscal situation bill, the expanded value-added tax. He said more substantial reforms must be done.

"With today's political calm the political and economic chaos that divides our nation and our people will continue to deepen," Drilon said.

He defended his and the Liberal Party's decision to withdraw support from Mr Arroyo on July 6 as the right position to take.

"Moreover, I believe that leaders should have integrity and credibility to govern or lead when they call for sacrifices, people will follow," Drilon said.

The Senate morning started late at around 10:20 a.m. with all the senators, except for Sergio Osmeña III, showing up. It ended at past 12 o.m. without anybody moving to declare the Senate presidency vacant.

No exams a maine

Santiago admitted to reporters that she would not challenge Drilon since she did not have the necessary votes.

"I'm sorry girls and boys, but hey, Frank Drilon and I are not going across a mano today," she told reporters, squelching speculations that she would pull off a surprise by moving to declare Drilon's post vacant.

But she said she "might be interested" in the Senate's top post if it were offered to her.

"Otherwise, I don't mind the ghost of a chance because the chosen of a minute presidency is not an accidental competition or even a problematical competition," she said.

"It is a question of whether you have a critical mass of senators supporting you, and whether you can gain enough momentum so that you can pick up supporters along the way."

CIVIL RELATIONS are maintained with great effort by protagonists President Arroyo and Senate President Drilon.

Drilon and Senate Majority Floor Leader Francis Pangilinan, two of the three Liberal Party senators who broke away from Ms Arroyo on July 6, thus performed their usual roles in reading and approving the day's agenda.

Minor over

"I've always said that my successors will depend upon the will of the majority of the senators," Drilon told reporters.

After four years in the Senate, it's never over till it's over," Pangilinan said when asked if he expected surprises during the day.

Some senators, however, did not rule out the possibility that somebody would file a resolution declaring the Senate presidency vacant after gathering the votes of 13 senators in the coming weeks.

But this early, independent opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said the minority likes bad mayhem to associate Drilon.

"We should not rock the boat while one section of the government is being rocked in order to maintain the stability of the economy," he told reporters. "In the meanwhile, I think there will be no possibility of any disruption in the business in the Senate."

But the short first day session did not end without fireworks.

Before the chamber could approve a House resolution informing the President that both Houses would hold a joint session to hear her Asena, Pimentel stood up to move that he wanted to add a "little modification."

"I would like to make an addendum that the Senate minority senators will not be there to attend the Asena," he said, drawing chuckles from members of the minority bloc and prompting Pangilinan to suspend the session.

Boycott

Apart from Pimentel, Pimentel said Senators Defensor, Enrile, Miguel Zubiri, Juan Ponce Enrile, Panfilo Lacson, Jamby Madrigal, Alfredo Lim and Edgardo Angara were snubbing the President's national address, one of the rare times the minority bloc was united on an issue. Reports from Volt Contreras, TJ Burgonio and Abbi Libog-Jocelyn

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INQUIRER

InqBox

Question of the Week

Do you think the planned shift from a presidential to a parliamentary-federal form of government will solve the current crisis?

Senders of short (0 facts as published in Tuesday's InqBox will each receive an "Inquirer Shirt"!

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FPJ leader dies in road accident

By DJ Yap

FRIENDS said his area is big loss to the movement that had sought to elect former Sen. Fernando Poe Jr. (FPJ) president.

Gerardino "Johnny" Medalero, 56, leader of the opposition group Mabalacanang Alayon ng Taong Inyan (Mata), died yesterday after a road accident along Don Mariano Marcos Avenue in Quezon City.

Medalero was driving a motorcycle along the southbound lane when he was sideswiped by a Mitsubishi delivery van near Fern Road in Barangay Holy Spirit, traffic police said. He was thrown off the vehicle and suffered a head hit, police said.

Medalero was rushed to the Don Mariano Hospital but died moments later, said SPO2 Reynaldo Pelayo. The driver of the van turned himself in after the accident, police said.

The former leader of the PFJ for President Movement was supposed to join a group of antigovernment protesters at the Batasang Pambansa complex after monitoring police barricades at Don Mariano Marcos Avenue earlier, the leaders' bodyguard and Lingguy Abrigo, leader of the National Council of Concerned Veterans, also a pro-FPJ group.

He described Medalero, an artist and former BB. Proclamation governor, as "energetic and in quintessence" man.

Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay said Medalero was "a pillar in the FPJ movement."

Added Abrigo: "Unlike other leaders who became inactive after the elections, Johnny remained the fight."

V-Bar slay suspect posts bail

By Tina G. Santos

DUPER Jamero, the northward gunman in a shooting incident outside a Makati CBD bar last month which claimed the life of building relocation director Leon Jastinigo, was released from detention after posting bail bonds.

Charged with homicide by the Department of Justice (DOJ) in the Makati Regional Trial Court, Jamero, 32, posted a P40,000 bail at the executive judge's office of the Manila Regional Trial Court last Thursday.

However, Special Investigator Albert Cardoz of the NBI Background Investigation Division said a warrant of arrest could be issued soon against Jamero once the DOJ resolves early its preliminary investigation for the other charges filed against the suspect.

Jamero is also facing direct assault with frustrated homicide charges for injuring responding policeman Senior Insp. Benjamin Bolante, whose right arm was fractured when he was hit by one of the gunman's shots.

Jamero was also charged with illegal possession of firearm and multiple physical injuries.

After he gave up to authorities on July 3 following a massive manhunt by police and NBI agents, Jamero admitted that he had mistakenly shot Jastinigo in the midst of a brawl around 4:30 a.m. on June 4, outside the Brenna Bar (Tribe) in Ayala Center, Makati City.

Jamero said he merely did so out of frustration, as he recalled not being garaged up on even if he only wanted to justify two women entangled in a fight, one of whom was his acquaintance.

Meanwhile, the NBI is set to file a case against businessman Charito Angeles today through organize criminal information that would be consolidated with Jamero's cases for multiple trial.

Jamero and Angeles will be charged with violating illegal gun in relation to Article 38 (assemblage) in homicide of the Revised Penal Code.

Angeles, who was with the suspect during the incident, allegedly handed Jamero the gun right before the shooting, based on the latter's own admission.

Authorities had also learned that Angeles, of Cambridge Street, Philborough Subdivision, Muntinlupa City, owned the Toyota Hi-Ace Jamero used in the drive-by shooting.

"There are circumstantial evidences that points to her possible involvement," Cardoz said.

On the other hand, the NBI said it has yet to fully ascertain the liability of Hector Mig. Bobon Jastinigo, Jr. was suspected that Valero was the owner of the Glock 357 Jamero allegedly used in the shooting.

Taguig marks 'banak' fest today

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TAGUIG residents will head for the city's riverbanks today as they celebrate the first century-old legend of the miracle of the "banak" fish.

Dubbed as the Sta. Ana Ng Banak River Festival, the celebration traces its roots to an ancient legend of a woman with a little girl who would invite fishermen from the waters around the Laguna lake to fish in the river.

The story was named by the "taga-gilid," from where Taguig City got its name.

Mother and child

The presence of the woman and child came to be known in July 1847, some time after the installation of St. Anne as the Patroness of Taguig.

Fishermen in those times said the woman and child who had come with their invitation to fish in the river resembled the images of St. Anne and her little child, Mary, which stood on the church altar.

Since then, every July, the town near St. Anne's church would overflow with thousands of locals and fish.

Beauty

Fishermen from neighboring towns would go out in their boats to the river to get their share of the bounty which they considered a blessing from the saint.

The fishermen would then throw shares of their catch to people who watched their boats for merchandise, who would then toss back useless delicacies and fruits in return.

The traditional gathering of fishermen and townfolk took a bizarre turn over the years when the image of St. Anne was carried by fishermen in a floral procession.

Meanwhile, farmers would donate in the streets in gratitude for the saint's kindness.

Floral parade

Residents and visitors from neighboring towns and cities come each year to witness the festival procession, either from the riverbank or in bancas floats), according to Taguig Public Information Officer Jun Somera.

The regatta would start at Bambang Bridge at 6 a.m., proceed to Wawa and then return to Bambang Bridge, highlighted by the traditional tossing of fruits and other food items between boat riders and spectators.

A Mass will follow later at the Archdiocesan Shrine of St. Anne after the floral parade.

A colorful dancing parade, called "Sayawan sa Banak" by townsfolk, will then take place in the afternoon.

Lift-style

The harvest is also observed by former Taguig residents who are now living in California, Somera said.

Inspired by their devotion to St. Anne, Taguig natives now in the United States organized the Taguig Association of America (TAA) in 1984. The TAA has four chapters—in San Diego, San Jose, San Francisco and Los Angeles—where the event is held almost every year.

Mayor Freddie Tinga, Somera said, is proud that Taguigueños in the US continue to propagate civic pride, which is listed in his administration's program of governance.

While Tinga leads the floral procession today, Vice Mayor George Elias heads a delegation that would join TAA's gathering in San Francisco for their 21st year celebration of the feast of St. Anne, said Somera.

LEAFY PLAYGROUND
Children frolic on a bed of leaves in a shady patch off Don Mariano Marcos Avenue, Quezon City.

Couple in pyramid scam nabbed at Naia

By Tina G. Santos

A COUPLE wanted for allegedly duping several investors through a pyramid scam was arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) yesterday morning at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Apprehended on the basis of three warrants of arrest from the regional trial courts of Quezon City, Pasig City and Occidental Mindoro were spouses Sheila Renante and Ronald Geronimo, of Villasol Subdivision, Pasig City.

They were arrested based on a petition for remedium filed upon a request made by the justice department of the United States Department of Justice.

The Geronimos, who fled to the US in January 2002, had been charged with estafa, the NBI said.

NBI Intelpol executive officer Clara de Castro said the couple was allegedly engaged in the lucrative business that female lately sold millions of capital stocks to unwitting investors.

Several of their victims had filed complaints against the couple after they reportedly failed to deliver the promise of exorbitant returns on investments, the NBI officials added.

De Castro said the Geronimos were initially arrested in the US for swindling. The couple was in US custody for almost four months until the justice department initiated the extradition proceedings against them, De Castro added.

Ocean Adventure should remain open

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

NOW THAT President Macapagal-Arroyo has come out officially in support of a change of government from the American-style presidential system to superlegislative-federal system, the hell is in the hands of Congress.

Congress—both the House of Representatives and the Senate—should now form itself in a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution. There is no other way out of the tremendous political mess for the country except a change in the form of government.

If the country adopts the federal system, the clamor of some Mindanao leaders to declare an independent world disengage from the Moro would stop. Fighting the government in Manila because they would have their own government under the federal system.

Under the parliamentary system, choosing national leaders is done by parliament whose members are elected by the people. Senators, who are elected at large like the President and Vice President, would be adversely affected by the change of government to the parliamentary system. That's why most senators don't like the idea.

* * *

In last Saturday's issue of the Inquirer, a story said Edgardo Manda, head of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), resigned for months. Mrs. Mendiola with Fred Gentlemen Mike Arroyo, Mindanao and to be general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa).

Manda was looked out of Miaa because of a report that he planned to renovate toilets at the cost of P100 million for the many toilets at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. Instead, he found that this guy was transferred to the LLDA. I wonder whether he also planned to renovate the toilets of millions of pesos each at the LLDA office.

* * *

We like also of the children, the Ocean Adventure marine park complex, who say, for now, use US (and loan, should not be closed.

Ocean Adventure has given entertainment to children, as well as adults. The aquatic show's music features were like other adults.

"Hook," the show's star puppet, whale, died of gastrointestinal illness. He death has brought about a chance from animal rights advocates to close the park.

Never mind what these advocates say. The park should stay open. If Ocean Adventure is closed because raging wild animals a cruel, then the Manila Zoo should also be closed for the same reason.

CREEK AND CLEAN
As this forward-looking city of the future, development managers continue to provide an important service. Alongside Bonifacio Global City's four-spoke network, its advanced infrastructure activity design, the emerging business district is also extraordinary location and investors because of how it is maintained. Day-to-day upkeep of the city's well-managed greens is carried out by Bonifacio Estate Services Corp.

INQUIRER Platinum Code

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John Steer G. Dipasupil

No 5-star perks for this tourist

By Tarra V. Quismundo

HOTEL clerk rubbed inside a five-star hotel

According to a report from the Makati police, Toyotaka Fujii, a Japanese tourist, suffered such a fate on Saturday afternoon while billeted at the Shangri-la Hotel in Makati City.

Two unidentified robbers allegedly took the same elevator ride as Fujii around 2:40 p.m. on Saturday as the 38-year-old tourist made his way up to his sixth-floor hotel room.

Upon opening the door of his room, two men suddenly appeared from behind, and shoved him, the police report said. As he struggled to repel the attack, one of the robbers punched him in the left eye, the report added.

Using a television cord, the robbers bagged Fujii and then proceeded to collect the tourist's valuables, including ¥200,000 in cash, or roughly P100,000. Also stolen were the tourist's credit cards, ATM cards, two cellular phones, a digital camera, and his eyeglasses.

The robbers then rushed out of the hotel room, eluding security personnel, said the police. In most cases of this kind, the hotel usually notifies the police of the incident.

The hapless Fujii said there were no signs that the hotel's security officers, but was told they were not aware of the incident, the police report said.

The source of this reporter's story, Makati Shangri-La's corporate communications officer, however, said an official report on the incident had yet to reach its office.

The guest had left the country, and requested the hotel not to divulge details on the matter, the officer added.

Makati police said they would assess security personnel of other hotels in the city about this particular modus operandi of robbers.

Records from their Theft and Robbery Unit showed that a similar incident happened last month in a small hotel in the city where a Korean was victimized by two robbers who surprised him outside the door of his room.

MetroBriefs

Cabbie found dead in Taguig City

A MAN was found dead inside his taxi he was driving early morning yesterday in Taguig City.

While on patrol duty at around 5:00 a.m. along General Santos Avenue in Upper Bicutan yesterday, Taguig City police discovered an abandoned taxicab in one of its unlit streets, said Southern Police District Spokesman Chanson Chumacera.

Upon the Sagum-I taxi report, Inside the taxi, police found the body of 41-year-old Muktar Hakimdal at Sta. Luisa Street, Bicutan, Taguig City, stabbed with gunshot wounds in his face and body.

Police believe that Hakimdal was a victim of a holdup gang. However, the motive behind yesterday's PTSE was found unfounded by those of the Crime Operations. Three spent shells and three clips of a .45-cal. pistol were also recovered from the crime scene. The victim was brought later to the Bicutan Funeral Homes. *Jaime R. Ely*

'Peaceful' day at north Metro

POLICE in Northern Metro Manila have relatively peaceful day yesterday on massive demonstrations accompanying President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address made without to Quezon City, which is under the Central Police District, in Valenzuela City, a solitary case of theft was recorded in the terror of the city's police station. The theft victim was identified as Ronald Arlan Segura, 27, married and a field worker of ABS-CBN, of Blk. 31 Dian St., Gen. T. De Leon, Valenzuela City. Police said that Segura discovered early morning yesterday that his bag containing P140,000 in cash and two cellular phones worth P24,000 was missing and before entry have been stolen. Investigators, however, failed to find signs of forcible entry to Segura's residence. *Wilma P. Zaragoza*

Free diabetes checkup for street sweepers

THE CITY government of Mandaluyong will conduct a free diabetes consultation and health checkup for its more than 110 street sweepers as part of the city's observance of "Diabetes Awareness Week." Mayor Benhur Abalos said the program aims to ensure that the city's street sweepers are healthy and physically fit for the everyday demands of their work. Abalos said other many of these employees are already in the 40-50 age bracket, a regular health examination is important. Rose Pugeda-Bawen of the city's Health Education and Promotion Office said street sweepers could avail of free FBS screening, cholesterol examination, ECG plus foot care.

Those who would be diagnosed for diabetes or high blood pressure would be given starter doses of medicines. The consultations will be held on Monday at the Kalayaan ng Ilaya building, City Hall complex, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Help Abegail

FIVE-YEAR-OLD Abegail Duque needs your help. She has been diagnosed with left foot acute lymphoma by doctors at the Philippine General Hospital. Her father, Joven, works as a tricycle driver and sometimes he laborer, and cannot shoulder the cost of her treatment. Then are appealing to kindhearted readers for financial assistance. Interested persons may contact 9916-87-9972. Donations can also be sent through Equitable PCI Bank. May Lindsay, Bulacan Branch, to account #161-00888-0.

ABEGAIL Duque

UP Ecosoc summit

THE GREEN SOCIETY of the Philippine Economics Society will be holding a National Youth Summit for Sustainable Development on July 28 at the Dolores Mayuga Hall at the UP School of Economics (Diliman, Quezon City). Topics of lectures: Population Control and Business and the Environment with speakers from the Asian Institute of Management, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the House of Representatives, Philippine Business for the Environment and the Population Commission. Tickets will be sold at Php 300 (inclusive of meals, conference kit and t-shirt under your name). Awarding of the Club the City! photojournalism contest and an exhibit of entries will also be held. For questions and reservations, email ryzel1000@yahoogroups.com or contact Pulbi at 9971-6909/983, Ros at 9909-926/2013, or Lyneal 9916-201-6626.

TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2001

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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SPORTS

Editor Rodolfo S. Plaridel

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RP dribblers buck loss of Miller, down Kazakhs

Nationals shoot for No. 3 vs Koreans

TAIPEI — With a heavy heart, prolific guard Willie Miller was forced to pack his bag for home after severely spraining his right ankle in the Philippines' 82-74 win over Kazakhstan Sunday in the William Jones Cup basketball tournament at the Taipei College Physical Education gym.

An important part of the RP-Sun Shipyard Red Lions's backcourt rotation, the 5-foot-11, former PBA MVP will be replaced by Dennis Miranda of Mapua Institute of Technology, after a request to join the team Wednesday.

The Filipino fought like wounded tigers after Miller went out for good in the second quarter and posted their second straight victory in the eight-single-round tournament.

The RP-SSH squad earlier cut down Qatar, 81-71, behind a scintillating first half performance (eight-for-ten) of national coach Chot Reyes' heaping praises on the explosive backcourt trio of Jayjay Helterbrand, Brandon Cortez and Dennis Espinosa.

RP-SSH also battling Korea Asiad squad South Korea at press time last night. The South Koreans were also undefeated in two games, having beaten Kazakhstan, 84-69, on opening day and Indonesia, 98-73, in their second outing.

Miller left the floor with 6:52 left in the second quarter and the Filipinos holding a 36-34 lead. He took a lead fall after missing a jumpshot, badly injuring his ankle which swelled as soon treatment applied to it.

"It's definitely a big loss," coach Reyes said. "We're starting to slowly but surely see the true potential of this team after Miller joined the team here. We have to go by different plans right now.

"But all is not lost for us."

Miller will be sidelined for about four months, according to the team's chairman, and will miss Talk N' Text's first two games in the PBA Open Conference, which starts in October.

"Mawala man ang isang sangkap," said Miller. "Sayang, pero ito ay isang malaking... especially now we established ourselves as a team. I really wanted to help the team."

MILLER: Backcourt ace for RP-SSH

Miranda was chosen to replace Miller as Jimmy Alapag and Mike Cortez have not returned from the United States, where another Philippine team also piloted by Reyes saw action last week.

Cameron were seen against the Kazakhs, Helterbrand took over the reins from Miller and put the ball down low to big man Reinel Sabbaral, Korie Raymundo and Art Espinas.

A 17-4 run capped by a Tadarra Bowie-point play transformed a slim 67-65 lead into a 82-69 badge for the Filipinos.

Co-favorites Nations of Russia and US team Nanang Lone joined RP-SSH and South Korea on top of the standings with 2-0 slates.

The Russians downed the Japanese, 87-58, while Nanang Lone ripped host Chinese Taipei, 95-74.

The scores:

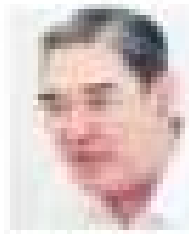
RP-SSH 82 — Helterbrand 15, Sabbaral 14, Espinas 13, Miranda 10, De la Cruz 7, Hendrawan 7, Miller 6, Raymundo 6, Pe-Quimpo 0, Cabing 0, Williams 0.

KAZAKHSTAN 74 — Berdnov 16, Yevsyukov 14, Kibardi 12, Shanfil 8, Tsiyanda 6, Chyzhevskiy 5, Shpilyk 4, Lavrinin 4, Baumgart 4, Tsenkovskiy 0, Zakharov 0.

Quarters: 21-13, 31-32, 59-50, 82-74.

Martelino picked to head new cage body

By Marvin R. Castillo



MARTELINO

MANDAUE — "Mayong" Martelino, a former top official of the Asian Basketball Confederation, was unanimously elected yesterday president of the Philippine Basketball Federation.

The multi-millionaire [illegible] secretary general of the [illegible] Basketball Association of the Philippines was overpowered after Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas, also a former SBP official, bagged all but Sunday citing his commitments in Congress and old age.

"The curse of old soldiers," said the 76-year-old Martelino, as he opened one of the new group, which faces the daunting task of convincing the international basketball federation (FIBA) that it

Alaska rejects report on possible Eala replacement

By Musong R. Castillo

ALASKA representative to the PBA board of governors yesterday denied ever talking to a prospective successor to Philippine Tennis Association commissioner Noli Eala.

Amapol Tiñio, since he Aces' team manager, called the business is completely dirty a story that came out yesterday, saying that "everything since the Alaska team does is do exclusively."

The business, quoting sources from the four ballclubs, ran a story on Monday that said four teams were talking to one person as prospect without knowing that they were talking to the same man.

Tiñio said that being the Alaska representative on the PBA board, he has talked to no one to yesterday about the commissionership.

Despite phenomenal gate receipts and television ratings, Tiñio said Alaska is "satisfied" with Eala's performance.

"I [dig] in attendance and TV ratings goes with the economics, the political situation and all time," Tiñio said. "We [the PBA] will get back."

But the business sources remains insistent in his claim, even as the PBA board of governors set for Aug. 2 a crucial meeting to evaluate the performance of Eala, among other matters.

The other teams which the business sources have mentioned as keen on looking for a new commissioner are the Tigers, Red Bull Barako and Talk 'N Text.

Officials of Red Bull and Talk 'N Text have crossed swords with Eala, a stalwart for PBA rules, many times in the past.

CHINESE TAIPEI'S repeat champions make their victory parade after routing Team Philippines in the finals of the Asia Pacific Bronco baseball meet.

Taiwan batters bag crown

Champs overwhelm Filipinos to claim World Series berth

CHINESE-TAIPEI peppered Team Philippines with a volley of hits in the third inning en route to an abbreviated 12-2 victory yesterday that capped its impressive sweep of the 2005 Asia Pacific Zone Bronco Baseball Championship before a big crowd at the Sto. Niño diamond in Marikina City.

Lin Chih-hsien led the Taiwanese siege as he drove in five runs on three hits in four trips to the plate including a grand slam home run in the third inning that sailed over the pink-colored fence at right field.

Lin's grand slam blast highlighted a 14-hit attack by the Taiwanese, also the winners of last year's event held in Beijing. The game was called after the fifth inning due to the 10-run mercy rule.

Ninety Chin-shing, Lin Tzu-wei, Chen Wei-hsun and Liu Wen-hsien banked up Lin with a combined eight hits and seven runs batted in (RBIs).

The hosts, made up of batters from elite world-class diwo making city, headed by Mayor Marie Lourdes Fernando, scored their only runs at the bottom of the fourth inning to make it 12-1.

Ryan Charlie Lawrence Magsa and Kenneth Marshall reached second and third bases on singles. But baseman Ilito Ramos blasted a double to left field that sent them home.

Jang Cheng-lin, who took the reins in a no-relief job, banished out the last three Filipinos batters to close the hosts' account, sparking a celebration by the Taiwanese.

The victory earned for Chinese-Taipei another trip to California for the Bronco Baseball World Series starting Aug. 6.

After pitching a few batters in the Philippines' stunning 7-2 win over Japan Friday, Magsa struck out nine Taiwanese batters but just couldn't contain their awesome lineup on the plate.

"Mahirap po talaga silang pumalo (They're a strong hitting team)," said the 12-year-old Filipino.

Still, Rodolfo "Boy" Dagoon Jr., president of the organizing Philippine Baseball Association, was proud of the 10 toss' performance in the tournament hosted by Rho Wise Metroplitan, Ayala Brewery Alaminos, Jollibee, Golden Mets Laboratories, Chihsing Barrel Standalone, and Image Brands and Sears.

"There is nothing to be ashamed of," said Dagoon, who is also arranging the 2009 Sea Pacific Asian Baseball Championship slated Aug. 13-14, also in this city. "The boys played their best and we should be proud of them."

The Filipinos rounded themselves with the victory of Joseph Angelo Incampo in the 100-meter backstroke (1:09.64) and judging Chinese Taipei's Lin Tzu-wei, who had five.

Gejon guns for WBA title

By Edmer L. Lagumbay

UNDAUNTED Gabonese Isthmic Gejon challenges World Boxing Association minimumweight champion Noel Tolentino on Sept. 22 at The Arena in Yokohama, Japan.

A Wilmer Isidad protégé, Gejon, considered tall at 5-foot-5(in) for a fighter who weighs only 105 lb., is ranked No. 2 by the Shizuoka-based WBA, and boasts an undefeated record of 21 wins (13 KOs) and a draw.

"I am ready to give Noli a good fight," the 27-year-old Gejon said in an interview.

It will be a tough battle, though, for the Mindanao City-based fighter.

The 24-year-old Tolentino hosted reigning champ Noli (13-1, 8 KOs) will be making the third defense of the title he regained following a self-imposed retirement in 2003.

Considered one of Japan's best fighters, Noli has save seniors on April 16 when he dominated Ramon Hirata but was to retain his title.

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Martelino picked . . .

is the new and legitimate association of the sport in the country.

Head Rodolfoes founder Ms. Jorge was elected senior vice president, while Philippine Basketball League commissioner Chito Trinidad and Boyet Lee of Hotel were named VPs for men and women's basketball, respectively.

Martelino, who became the SBC secretary general as a result of his long stint with the PAP under Lito Payao, exhibited among the seven-time general "pending consultation with the board of trustees."

Ex Victor Cobo-of Cayetan and Ex Mackinley Sandoz of Adamson were named treasurer and auditor respectively.

Martelino made no secret that the first order of his agenda is to request the recognition for the Philippines, at least before the staging of the Southeast Asian Games there.

Marcelo tops second round of Lynx Cup

JOHN Marcelo of Marcelo Racing Circuit drove consistently to dominate Round 2 of the Fifth Red Lynx Cup recently at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Marcelo, a former air ski champion, stayed on course for the title by undoubtedly a win in the second race with a third place and a runner-up showing.

He topped two races to finish 1.

Clocking the fastest time of 2 minutes 38.326 seconds at the seventh lap, Marcelo turned back Jean Canapee to clinch victory in the second race.

Marcelo led for most part of the third race until he was hit from the rear by Pio Bonoli. Despite a dragging loss, Marcelo managed, Marcelo salvaged second, just 1.741 seconds behind Bonoli.

Marcelo later dismissed the incident with a smile.

"Though I feel it's better finishing the race, I wouldn't call it a disappointed. It's (the two-time) still part of racing and we all try our best to go ahead," said Marcelo.

"This is my first year in circuit racing, and the camaraderie among the racers is very light and fun."

Binalonan U-18 chess set

DAGUPAN pulled out an advance a one-day session Sunday to complete the first round of the Binalonan tournament in Binalonan Pangasinan, as drag 21. But tournamentists open in all classes after been postponed 60 on the day of the event. The impregnation FIDE grandmaster, the second chosen FC1850 and a medal. Bidyalayan FC1800 and to medal and the fourth Binalonan Mayor. The fifth to 10th finishers will receive prizes in kind. For inquiries, call manager Antonio Soriano Lacsina at (063)-5306868.

Pazon rules first BRC drag racing

PAZON'S Honda hatchback (above) crosses the payoff line way ahead of Danny Tiongco's prototype buggy in the Quick-8 face-off.

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—Wilson Pazon of Rosario Racing became the pioneer champion of the country's first permanent road legal drag strip as he finished seven strokes ahead of his nearest rival in the inaugural race of the BRC Drag Racing Festival at the Batangas Racing Circuit here.

The 47-year-old Pazon, a fun-car veteran of drag racing, captured the Quick 8 and Class A sedan eliminations rivals in the event sanctioned by the sporting Automobile Association of the Philippines.

He posted the fastest time of 12.607 seconds in his Honda hatchback on the 400-meter track to rule the Quick 8 division over Danny Tiongco, who timed 13.793 on a prototype buggy pair.

Pazon also clocked 12.2401 seconds to capture the Class A crown over roommate Jun Sarmiento, who timed 13.064.

"I took some time adjusting the setting of the car and I'm happy the effort paid off," said Pazon. "The point the first round and the first payoff are worth two extra whistles I didn't really expect."

Winning the other divisions were Louie Montalbo and Raymond Cruz.

Montalbo, aboard his Honda Civic, ruled Class B with a time of 14.097 seconds over Christopher Santiago who lost the face-off due to breakout.

Cruz clocked his Black 14 Honda to victory in Class C, clinching 14.353 against Russell Torres, also a victim of a breakout.

Clerk of course Hi Cuello and Jun Espino supervised the inaugural races.

"We're thankful to all those who came and supported the inaugural race," said BRC manager Sherwin Mesina. "The competitors gave positive response so the Drag Strip and the race, and are asking when the next race will be."

Makati, FEI-Cavite fives take Espiritu cage openers

CAVITE ended a dry spell here on Sunday. The PEI-Makati fillers registered after shutting Philippine Maritime Institute 88-69 , Sunday at the start of the Mrs. Danny Espiritu Cup basketball tournament at the Bonifacio gymnasium in Bacoor City. Rookie Pantoja, who dispatched the tallest Batangas 20pts for the fillers's first season, scored a game-high 21 points to lead the 2pts over Pamplona, which bowed to two points Alex Jaramillo and Rene Rodrigo and former national players Pedro Bellas and Enrique Icban. BRGY's Fe Barbosa-Asuncion Castle turned tested back Star Defenders Foundation Castle. 89-63. Lobe to share the early lead with the Stars in the first round encounters by Gus Gilgard, Jon S. Hadley Cortez. Formerly 67-2 Geneva Milling Corp. flying Cooking Oil and Petron Diamond. Other teams in the event held in cooperation with BEC are PGH Food Products Ancient Paradigm Alto, Mac Mac Hotel Co. Sto. Rosa Laguna and Medalla.

Washington, GMA & Eala

SPECTATOR

Al S. Merkitza

TWO HUNDRED-TWENTY years ago, George Washington, the first president of the United States of America, delivered his second inaugural address following his reelection.

Considered the greatest American president — even Washington was the greatly respected commander of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and presiding officer of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 — he is described as the American Presidency whose dignity in "bowing to the supremacy of the law over personality and its relinquishing presidential power after establishing a precedent of two terms" were among his important legacies.

Washington's second inaugural address on March 4, 1793, was no reflection in public speaking, for it consisted only of two paragraphs. I'm reprinting the speech in the hope that 1,000 leaders doing crises from it, no matter that she delivered her brain yesterday.

Washington's speech:

"Fellow-Citizens: I am again called upon by the voice of my country to execute the functions of its chief magistrate. When the occasion proper for it shall arrive, I shall endeavor to express the high sense I entertain of this distinguished honor, and of the confidence which has been reposed in me by the people of united America.

"Previous to the execution of any official act of the president of the Constitution requires an oath of office. This oath I am now about to take, and in your presence: That if I shall be found during my administration of the government I have in any instance violated willingly or knowingly the injunctions thereof, I may (besides incurring constitutional punishment) be subject to the imputation of having basely violated so essential a part of the sacred obligation I take before the face of my God and heaven's assistance.

Unlike Lito, Boong was not asked to resign, though the resignal were his disagreement with management policy that requires him to use all 12 players in a game.

Coaching is the hardest job in sports. As I keep saying, a coach is only good for as long as he is winning games for his team. It is not enough that he wins games. To boot owners, only championship hopeless matter.

Which brings us to commissioner Eala. Is Eala being the PBA throwe this early in his career?

I mean, has Eala's term a bad commissioner, or that rumors persist about a bloc in the PBA board wanting him out?

If reports are to be believed, four teams (Talk 'N Text, Sta. Lucia, Red Bull and Alaska) have talked to a guy they want to appoint in place of Eala.

It's that easy, huh?

Assuming this is true, here's one are we that the hardpicked guy will not turn out to be a puppet of the rebel group of the powerful to succeed Eala?

You also yourself to be used in a tug-of-war, you are nothing (no comment dudes). You will not have a mind of your own once you are in the PBA hot seat.

If at all, what the four had done ... assuming again the rumor is true—would be the unbridled lust practice I have ever seen across with many decades of covering the PBA.

Whoever formed the rumor ought to receive the Oscar.

If true that the four teams are hell-bent on ousting Eala, they should do it the most honorable way: Resolve it within the confines of the four walls of the PBA boardroom.

We avoid screaming the similes bromides headline like "Eala's ouster."

Otherwise, let's all be hardnosed and hasten the demise of the league we had all painstakingly put up 30 years ago.

It takes time to build an institution, just one lousy move, if we use judgmental lapse, to topple it.

Ask GMA.

Comments to mwong@philnet.net

Lance leaves lasting legacy

LAST AND SWEETEST: Lance Armstrong savors his seventh and final trip to the podium with his children. AP

PARIS—To hate great sport because nobody had great before by winning seven Tours de France is in itself an unprecedented contribution to the sport of cycling. Lance Armstrong's legacy reaches even further.

The American's fashion story has many new sources that feel in the much more prosaic universe over the hardships of the Tour, is his greatest achievement.

That Armstrong became the most successful Tour rider in history after a near-fatal illness gave hope to millions and the yellow wristband worn by cycling fans around the world to help accompanied cancer foundation bore testimony to his healing role in that respect.

His mission as a spokesperson for the millions affected by cancer worldwide will become even more important now that he has retired from the sport.

Armstrong's entry in the history books should not, however, be a threat to his successful battle against cancer.

He is simply one of the greatest bike riders and one of the greatest champions of all time.

The Tour's 3.2C-plus lessons is filled with drama, human tragedies and heroes and it was almost to consider that such a larger-than-life figure as Armstrong should play a big part.

It was seven Tours requires 3.2C-plus on the bike, riding some 3000 km each day, in rain and in intense heat, up the highest mountains in Europe and down into windswept valleys at more than 60 kph.

It involves 200 other riders out to defeat you, months and kilometers of exhausting training in the cold of winter and in spring, far from home.

This was Armstrong's life for the past seven years, a life of sacrifice and self-inflicted suffering.

It took a tough man to dedicate seven years of his life to the single task of winning the Tour, to lose weight, change his pedaling frequency, improve his climbing skills.

Any fool's thing could have stopped Armstrong's plan: crashes, illness, bad luck. Reuters

TIGER: Woods will lead an elite field of 156 in a bass for the $5 million pot. AFP

Watson wrests Sr British golf

LONDON—Tom Watson won his second Senior British Open title in three years on Sunday after a wire play-off with Ireland's Des Smyth at the Royal Aberdeen Golf Club.

The 55-year-old American took victory after enduring his second three play-off in two years after he took the honors at Turnberry in 2003.

Watson, who also won five British Open titles before switching to the Seniors tour, needed three extra holes to clinch the top prize ahead of the 51-year-old Smyth after they had both finished on four under par.

The play-off saw both players par the 18th twice before they switched to the par three 17th where Smyth hit the bunker from the tee.

He then failed to hold his 20-foot par putt which sealed victory for Watson who recovered from the back of the green. "The play certainly means something to me," said a delighted Watson.

"It was something of a struggle and it looked as if we could have played that 18th hole all night and still been locked together," Smyth was philosophical about his defeat. "I had a couple of three putts and you can't do that against the class of opponents. I hit a poor tee shot at 17th. My concentration maybe just lapsed a bit but Tom's a great champion." Overnight leader Watson was caught by Greg Norman and Smyth and, although the Australian dropped off the pace, the Irishman matched him and his American counterpart shot for shot from the eighth on.

Norman fashed a 20-foot birdie putt at the last for a 66 to finish three under. AFP

ASIA'S RICHEST

Woods to compete in Shanghai

BEIJING—World No. 1 Tiger Woods will lead a host 156 of the world's top 10 players in November's Champions tournament in Shanghai, set to be the richest golf event in Asia.

Up to 1360 players will compete for $5 million in prize money at the Nine 18-12 hour tournament, co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour, the PGA Tour of Asia, India and the South African Sunshine Tour, the China Daily said on Monday.

"This is the richest event in China and the richest event in Asia," Tong Dongjiang, Shanghai manager for sponsor International Management Group, was quoted as saying.

China is hosting a growing number of lucrative international tournaments, including this year's Asian Open and other European tour events.

Golf is booming in China as the country's middle class swells. The country has over 200 courses and many more are under construction. Reuters

Phelps flops, then rebounds; Schoeman rips world record

MONTREAL—Michael Phelps rebounded from a rare failure to capture his first gold medal at the world championships on Sunday after he had to win a second night when had been early in his very first event.

The American stole gold in the 4x100-meter freestyle relay after he flopped out of the individual 400 on Thursday, sending teammates Jason Lezak, who crossed his own injury by beating the first swimmers to win gold medals at four world championships.

Australia won a second title on Sunday with an exposed victory in the women's sprint relay while Farah teenager Laure Manaudou overcame a bout of nerves to win the women's 400-m freestyle and add the world title to the Olympic crown she captured in Athens last year.

Roland Schoeman, part of the South African team that spectacularly ruined Phelps' campaign for eight golds in Athens, set a world record in the semifinals of the men's 50-m butterfly on Sunday, stopping the clock at 23.64 seconds to edge 0.29 off the previous record established by Australian Geoff Huegill in Austin last year.

Phelps had been one of the favorites in the 400m but failed as badly at the end of his heating hour that he finished 10th overall and had to watch the final from the stands.

With Ian Thorpe taking the year off, there was no one left to mount a serious challenge to Phelps and the undisputed king of long distance swimming obligingly waited to his first 400-m world title after finishing runner-up to Thorpe at the previous three world championships.

Britain's Kris Pillidge was second while teammate Hibbard of Tasmania came home third.

"It was a shame that Ian and Michael weren't there in the final but I really would thinking about that too much," Hackett said. Reuters

Viewership up; cycling shifts gear

WASHINGTON—Nine years ago, most advisory Americans would have asked "Lance who?" if you had mentioned Lance Armstrong.

Today, even those who do not normally follow cycling know that he has survived cancer, just won the Tour de France for the seventh straight time and launched an entertainment event with his yellow Livestrong wristbands.

Others referred to just as "Lance," Armstrong was ranked 15th on Forbes Magazine's list of the top 100 most powerful celebrities this year. He appears as comfortable on the red carpet with the stars, with rock star girlfriend Sheryl Crow as he is on his bicycle.

Armstrong...knows by being as obsessive about his bike training as he is about his many sponsor obligations and sworn enforcement of form—made history last year with his race triumph win at the Tour de France and retired from the sport on a high note with a seventh victory in this year's race which ended on Sunday.

He has raised more than $11 million and sparked a worldwide phenomenon over the past year with his Livestrong charity wristbands, helped to revitalize the 91 cycling race he and left a mark on the millions of cancer survivors in the United States.

Though Americans are nothing like cycling mad Europeans, interest in cycle racing has grown with Armstrong's success.

The Nielsen Life Network (TSN), the only channel in the United States that covers the Tour live, has seen a huge jump in the number of people watching cycling. Ratings are 40 percent higher for Tour viewers this year over 2004 and 91,56 viewership in the month of July is up 240 percent over June. Reuters

Bush congratulation

WASHINGTON—Lance Armstrong's triumphant farewell bicycling Sunday in Paris with his cancer-combative four de France victory brought praise from across America, including a call from US President George W. Bush. Bush telephoned Armstrong at Lance Armstrong's home, shortly after the finish from his retreat in Camp David, Maryland, said White House spokesperson Dorrie Frost. AFP

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Big boost for books and reading

Nestor U. Torre

J. K. Rowling's sixth Harry Potter book makes history selling 6.9 million copies in 24 hours in the US

THE "DYING" activity of reading got a big boost last week with the reported breaking of at least 6.9 million copies in 24 hours in the US.

The enormous success of the Harry Potter series has energized the publishing scene, and made avid readers out of millions of young people, some of whom used to think that reading was for nerds and losers.

We trust that these new converts to the fascination of the written word will go on to read other books as well, to open up their minds and hearts to other writers' worlds of wonder.

As for adult readers, they are being well-served by Oprah Winfrey's reinvigorated Book Club, which has reintroduced them to the power and beauty of masterworks like John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men."

In the Philippines, reading seems to be similarly boomed, as we hope that some local celebrities or prime movers use their clout with the public to promote reading, especially among the youth.

Yet, we get the occasional storytelling session and neighborhood book club, but bigger and more visible initiatives are needed to really make a dent on the public's consciousness.

Finally, we hope that the huge business that the latest Harry Potter book is generating will encourage a Filipino writer to dive come up with an imaginative book for young readers here, and that it will be so good that it will similarly set records.

Tricks of the trade

IN THE "user-friendly" world of show business, it isn't unusual for new talents to try to get noticed by pitching a fight with an established star.

Most stars know better than to respond, but when statistic-loop wrestling them, they sometimes answer in kind, and thus inadvertently give the statistic the notoriety they've been gunning for.

To take full advantage of the media attention generated by the stars' clashes, the statistic then go on "pity me" mode, crying that they've been unfairly accused by the up-grieved stars, whom they profess to love and admire to him.

Since the local audience loves underdogs, the "victimized" stars end up on the offensive in this manufactured vapor vehicle, and the statistic ends more "pumre points" on their "victim."

Oh, please, don't forget to buy their latest albums, or watch their upcoming concerts.)

Some months ago, a Filipino singer was at the receiving end of such a cynical star-making campaign. To her credit, she kept her attention on them for the most part—less she even, really blew her top and lowered at being so cheaply used to further a new singer's career.

Expectedly, the new singer reacted with the standard phrase pronouncements of innocence and hurt feelings, but the harm was done. We trust that other stars will learn from the established singer's experience, and avoid being so shabbily used in subsequent encounters with unbelievable little starlets with pre-signs dazz-

Show biz version of the Sona

Personnages A-1

the rock opera 'Jesus Christ Superstar,' will she squeeze be able to pinpoint the Judas Iscariot in her midst?

Trapped or back together?

IS IT JESS that after their much-hollywood annulment case, Shelbar Ocampo and Kristine Hermosa are back in each other's arms? There were lots of mixed evidence when Kristine suddenly announced that she's seeking nullity of their marriage because, in the first place, they never admitted that they got hitched. An insider said that it was just a ploy so that Kristine's team-up with TJ Trinidad in a soap would click. My source also insisted that Shel and Tessie had to resort to that to lure things up in their lukewarm career. Are they now trapped in a web of falsehood that's turn-creation?

'Wish Ko Lang' anniversary

GMA9, groundbreaking reality show 'Wish Ko Lang' has been the unbeatable ratings leader in the 4 p.m. Saturday time slot for three straight years. With so much to be thankful for, the show celebrates its third anniversary this July with a bang!

In its grandest anniversary special yet, "Wish Ko Lang!" has chosen three lucky families, one of which will win a fully furnished house and lot in Laguna worth P1 million. The two other families will receive a traditional showcase of riders a mini grocery or a carindoria worth P150,000 each.

Viewers get a chance to win the one of these families by typing WISH(SOLANG) and letter A for your children, B for tatt, or C for plywood house and then sending it to 2366 for Globe, 2366 for Sun Cellular and 387 for Smart and Talk N Text. One lucky texter will receive P50,000 in cash for joining the sweepstakes.

The winning family will be announced by 'Wish Ko Lang' host Vicky Morales during the second part of the anniversary special which will be aired on July 30.

Venue turns one

MY VINYL lounge at Carbon: I let it all hang out! I

Troy Montero's staying power

Text, styling and direction by Larry Gaviola
Photos by Rene Hendricks

FROM Montana, handsome hunk, product endorser, movie actor and celebrity with singing power, has just taken on a new role—as rock 'n' roll singer.

After "Happen" and "Ambon," a debut concert with brother KC at Bamboo Mecaia, Troy went on a series of limited concerts abroad with do-it-do (as they say in Wow).

"I couldn't believe the response! From Chicago to San Francisco, Las Vegas, Honolulu and Maui, the show was sold out," Troy told Inquirer Entertainment.

Lately, Troy's been in the news for his rumored association with actress Aubrey Miles. "We're giving each other some space," was all Troy would say.

He taught us that a relationship is a partnership, not ownership. *Pero ba, pahirapan pa rin.*

Cody Miller (his real name) was born and raised in Seattle, Washington, the eldest of three boys. His brothers, RC and Colby, have become celebrities, too.

Troy worked in his dad's real estate business and modeled for boats catalogues. At the time, he also had a garage rock band.

His brothers' KC made him stop in Zambales, saying the family costs and hunting with their grandparents. Their dads told Troy to try making it in Manila.

"I was nagged, and finally convinced. Manila seemed like another world. I had culture shock. When I landed in Lord and with the help of Dan Ben Montevirgen, I decided to stay."

One night in a club, dancer-choreographer Markdel Richard spotted him. "The following week, I was a host on ABS-CBN's 'Keep On Dancing' with Charlene Gonzalez."

Now he has an movie under his belt—it's opposite co-star Regine Velasquez—including seven in lifestyle program host for the network, to the end, Troy found his true passion—recording, composing and singing.

His first CD, "Special Memories," a compilation of hits from the '70s and '80s, was launched at a mini-stage.

But the exclusive pictorial, Troy wears superb designs for men by Corey Kalighad.

MMTA

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3 FANTASTIC FOUR
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PROMOS

Show biz . . .

In the QC area, Swan Lee will have a week-long first anniversary celebration from Aug. 1-7. The highlight of the affair is the hand jam and the "Naughty and Nice dance contest" championship slated Aug. 6. Come join the party people at Swan Lee Dining (owned by Lee Suat in the know as you serve it sumptuous dishes if not? here's enough of their chili chicken and sizzling carrot. Thanks to Ricardo Chang Nelson and Lizel for making the Lee Suat event at Swan Lee all the more.

For feedback, e-mail amemeghob.mmg@yahoo.com or dahsiss@inquirer.com.ph

Mark Meily

[illegible] in the country," he said. "In the '80s, it was the paper & pen[illegible] and now it's digital technology, which has democratized filmmaking."

Meily continued, however, that "digital technology would not make directors out of everyone."

Because what separates the amateur from the pro is fluency in film language and grammar.

This is the service provided by film schools like AFI and the International Academy of Film and Television in Cebu, the workshops conducted by filmmaker Peque Gallaga in Baguio, and the regular courses in UP, Ateneo, De La Salle, and the Mowelfund.

Rumored: Aboitiz's Alone Boysen also had plans of going back to teaching in UP Diliman.

Meily will return to teaching at the AFI in January or February next year.

"The growth of film education is astonishing," he related optimistic. "The future of Philippine cinema gets brighter and brighter."

BUSINESS

APC

Finance chief amenable to debt relief bid

Says diplomatic sector must initiate request

By Michelle V. Ramos

FINANCE Secretary Margarita Teves said he was open to the idea of seeking debt relief as a partial solution to the country's lingering fiscal problem.

But lack of commitments with foreign creditors regarding the possibility of rollovering some of the Philippines' external debts, however, should be left with people outside the government's economic team.

"We can ask for debt relief, but there are people who are capable of handling this, such as members of the diplomatic community. In cases where you talk of debt relief on a large scale, it will require talking with many nations," he said.

The newly appointed finance chief said the demands of servicing the government's fiscal and economic reform programs required full attention of the members of the economic team.

Although he said he had no objections with the Philippines making it be included in the list of countries whose debts should be purchased, the issues of the remaining debts relief with the international community should be assigned to officials outside the economic team, if the government would at all pursue such a proposition.

Teves made the statement in a response to a question on his view on debt relief raised during a dinner with members of the foreign press and the business community last week.

The proposal comes in the midst of the country's growing debt and mounting calls from other poor countries to have their obligations written off. As of March this year, the national government's debt reached P3.837 trillion, and about P1.8 trillion are used to finance maturities.

The government has been allocating at least 30 percent of its annual budget to interest payments. Interest and principal debt eat up nearly 50 percent of government revenues, the Department of Finance said.

The Philippine government has been making an extensive lobbying process, such as imposing higher taxes

continued on...

State firms remit ₱4.75B in dividends

THE NATIONAL government has already collected P4.75 billion in dividends from state-owned companies as of this month, surpassing its full-year target of P4.50 billion with still five months before the year ends.

This was announced by the Department of Finance, which said it was urging government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) and government financial institutions (GFIs) to voluntarily increase their remittances to the national government to help ease the planning budget deficit.

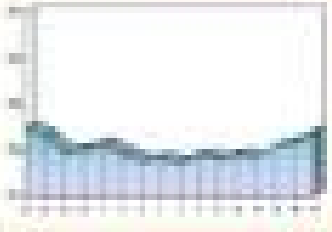
The DOF said the state-owned companies that remitted the biggest dividends as of July 18 were: Development Bank of the Philippines (P1.24 billion), Philippine Ports Authority (P913.5 million), Philippine National Oil Co. (P613.71 million), Land Bank of the Philippines (P500 million) and Philippine Economic Zone Authority (P388 million).

Other state-owned companies that have already remitted dividends included: Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (P245.89 million), Manila Golf International Airport Authority (P83.49 million), Philippine Tobacco and Reclamation Authority (P48.73 million), Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (P34.46 million), Cebu Air Inc. (P33.72 million), Philippine Fisheries Development Authority (P18.24 million).

National Housing Authority (P126 million), Manila International Container Terminal Services Inc. (P63 million), Philippine Economic Zone Authority (P38 million), Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (P25 million), Philippine Crop Insurance Corp. (P20 million), Philippine Export and Foreign Loan Guarantee Corp. (P15 million), Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (P10 million), Philippine Tourism Authority (P5 million), Philippine Veterans Investment Development Corp. (P5 million), Philippine Veterans Bank (P3 million), Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (P2 million), Philippine Veterans Investment Development Corp. (P1 million), Philippine Veterans Bank (P1 million), Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (P1 million).

more...

Currencies



Stock Market

Trading to be dictated by GMA speech

See more stories on Page B2

What's inside

RP, India sign air agreement

$29.7M in hot money flowed into RP amid crisis

Semiconductor exports up 6.8% in May

Inquirer Monitor

Figures that matter to our nation's life

Effects of macro indicators on budget deficit (2005, in billion pesos)

RP, India sign air rights agreement

Big market for local carriers

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINES and India last week signed a new air rights agreement that would allow Philippine carriers to fly daily to a key city in the subcontinent.

The new agreement, which would also allow Indian carriers to fly to a major destination in the Philippines, replaced an older deal that had remained dormant since 1949.

Tristan Medalla, executive director of the Civil Aeronautics Board, said the Philippine carriers would have to choose their key destination among the cities of New Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai and Chennai.

Indian carriers would also have the option to fly either to Manila or Cebu. Clark might also be considered, Medalla said.

He said the updated air services agreement with India was crucial, given a population of more than a billion and a growing tourism industry.

The deal will also allow Philippine and Indian carriers to drop off and pick up passengers at designated transit points.

Negotiations for the new air deal were concluded on July 25 in India.

The deal augments similar ones Asia's second populous economy is the first for the Philippines this year. Plans to sign similar agreements with Burma and Iran in the first half of the year did not materialize.

Medalla said India also threw in a provision for an open-skies deal for cargo in the visited/interested agreement.

The Philippines offered a similar deal, but restricted the open-skies arena within the Clark economic zone and Subic Freeport in Central Luzon.

Medalla said the 1949 air agreement between the Philippines and India did not designate flights capacity and route structure.

Last week, those empty items were clarified and defined, he said. A fifth freedom right, for instance, was finally made clear.

The fifth freedom provisions will allow the carriers of both countries to take passengers to an intermediate point, like Bangkok, and vehicle there, pick up passengers en route to bring to either the Philippines or India.

The intermediate point, according to Medalla, has yet to be identified.

The two countries also agreed to review the air deal after a year, and enhance the agreement where possible.

India, said Medalla, was open to expanding the daily flight schedule after a year. He said the Philippines would like India to open two more slots: Bangalore and Hyderabad.

Next year, the two countries may discuss a sixth freedom right, which may allow carriers to fly to a third destination after India or the Philippines.

WORKERS at the local unit of Cypress Semiconductor monitor an automated assembly line for semiconductors in Laguna. AP

Semiconductor exports increased 6.8% in May

By Raoul W. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE semiconductor exports posted a 6.8-percent growth in May, outpacing the rate of increase in global sales and cushioning the impact of the country's decline in the shipments of other electronics products on the country's total export performance.

The Department of Trade and Industry said semiconductor exports in May rose to $1.56 billion from $1.46 billion in the same month last year.

Sara Evans Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) showed that worldwide sales of semiconductor products expanded by only 4.1 percent in the same month.

Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino said the export performance of semiconductor products—another top dollar earner garments and textile—enabled the exporting industry to keep its growth momentum despite the continued rise in fuel prices that adversely affected economies worldwide.

He data showed that worldwide shipments of semiconductor products were affected by the drop in the price of Dynamic Random Access Memory (DRAM) chips, used widely for personal computers and mobile units.

Since DRAMs are one of the major segments of the total semiconductor market, any significant change in price would have an impact on total chip sales.

SIA projects flat global sales will grow by 6 percent in 2005 and 9.6 percent compounded yearly through 2009, mainly on strong demand for personal computers and wireless handsets.

The Semiconductor and Electronics Industry of the Philippines Inc. (Seipi), for its part, has revised its growth projection for the sector to 10 percent because from the original range of only 5 percent.

Exports of semiconductor electronics products, such as consumer electronics and laptops, are expected to stabilize when the ongoing investment programs of Toshiba, Quantia (laptops) and Seiko (for screen television) are completed. Toshiba and Quantia are likewise making adjustments in their product lines.

Toshiba transferred its production of notebook PCs to China, but increased the production of hard disk drives in its Laguna plant.

Hitachi Philippines, for its part, transferred its production of 2.5-inch drives for servers to Thailand, but plans to double its production of hard drives in this Philippine plant to 8 million in 2006 to 16 million in 2005.

The world left by Toshiba and Hitachi's removal, is by left. In May, goods contributing to the 26-percent decline in non-semiconductor electronic products exports.

Petron seen to surpass profit goal

By Abigail L. Ho

PETRON Corp. expects to surpass its P3.6-billion profit target for the year on the back of its strong first half performance and bright export prospects in the second half of the year.

"We're optimistic that we'll surpass (our full-year target)," Petron president and chief executive Ramon del Rosario said in a briefing after yesterday's stockholders' meeting.

The oil firm reported a net income of P2.3 billion in the first semester of the year. This was 79 percent higher than the P1.4 billion it posted in the same period last year.

Total revenue during the period surged to P85.3 billion, 29 percent higher than year-ago level.

The company attributed its strong first quarter performance to higher export and, crude and good regional prices. In the first half of the year, exports grew 18 percent to 2.26 million barrels from 1.92 million in the same period last year.

Its cash hedge exports grew by 9440 bbl from to the first half, boosting the export business' contribution to total first semester profit to 35 percent from 27 percent last year.

Domestic sales volume, however, registered a 9-percent decline in the first semester to only 22.68 million barrels due to weak local demand.

Overall, sales volume dipped 2 percent to 25.11 million barrels.

"We were able to take advantage of high prices of exports, which contributed significantly to our bottom line. We are also reaping the benefits from investments that improved the cost-efficiency of our Bataan refinery," Petron chair Ricardo Alanzalon said.

The company in early May inaugurated P100 million worth of new facilities at its Bataan refinery, making Petron the first in the country to be able to produce its own Clean Air Act-compliant fuel.

Petron's new Gasoil hydrotreater and Light Virgin Naphtha isomerization unit have the capacity to produce 22,000 barrels and 10,000 barrels a day, respectively, of CAA-compliant diesel and gasoline.

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$29.7M in hot money still flowed into RP amid crisis

By Doris C. Dumlao

SOME foreign portfolio funds withheld funds into the Philippines the week after top economic managers led by then Finance Secretary Jose Pantaleon put the Cabinet.

At the time, bargain-hunters believed that the resignations would result in a speedy resolution of the political crisis, analysts said.

Some fearless investors also found an opportunity to buy government securities to take advantage of the spreads in the interest rates that soared.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that some $29.7 million fresh inflows of "hot money" got into the Philippine stock exchange and government securities in the week ending July 13—a turnaround from the net outflows of $26.3 million incurred in the week after the value added tax was suspended by the Supreme Court.

In the case of government securities, there were gross inflows of $582 million as against total outflows of $289.5 million. BSP Governor Rafaelita M. Aldaba said these investors who also picked up private-sector securities and placed funds in peso deposits as interest rates had become "more attractive."

On the other hand, there were gross outflows of $53.8 million into the stock market, which offset the $43.6 million in total inflows.

Gross inflows of $1.6 million in peso time deposits were negated by the gross outflows of $12.9 million from the same instruments.

What tempered the capital flight at the time was the expectation that the departure of key economic managers would end the crisis, that since the President has rejected calls to resign, the market has started to leave for a prolonged political impasse.

Major oil player to push through with $250-M refinery investment

By Abigail L. Hu

PETRON Corp. will push through with its $250 million refinery enhancement project to allow the industry giant to take advantage of the increasing demand for petrochemicals in the region.

Khalid Al-Fahdagh, Petron president and chief executive, said during yesterday's stockholders' meeting that petrochemical demand would outpace global gross domestic product which could remain strong in the coming years.

"There's a unique opportunity for Petron right now in oil petrochemicals in the region," Al-Fahdagh said. "The market conditions for petrochemicals is very favorable. This is the golden age of refining petrochemicals."

Al-Fahdagh added that the firm would need to "take advantage of that opportunity."

"We are in a very good position to further develop our refinery asset to respond fast to opportunities [in] the petrochemical industry," he said.

Up to 2005, the company will need some $250 million to double its crude intake, raise production capacity and establish a benzene/toluene extraction facility, and propylene from fluid catalytic cracker and feedstock recovery unit, Al-Fahdagh said.

Once in place, the facilities will boost Petron's presence in the domestic market, as well as in countries such as China, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, he added.

In early May, Al-Fahdagh announced that Petron would be investing some $350 million to strengthen its refinery operations and expand its product base.

However, after undertaking some refinements and preparing a "clearer picture" of how the company should pace its investments in the coming years, the oil firm decided that $250 million should be enough until 2005, he said.

"It's just a matter of timing, as there may be other phases that will come at a later stage," Al-Fahdagh said. "It means plans is always subject to changes, economic condition evaluation. At the time, when we used $350 million, we were maybe looking at a busier picture."

He said the reduction in investment commitment had nothing to do with the country's current political state.

If anything, Petron chief Nicasio Alcantara said this was as good a time as any to make new investments in its refinery.

"While others are drying away from further investments, we look at this as an opportunity," Alcantara said. "We're putting more money into the refinery to make it more competitive."

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Finance chief . . .

even at a time of rising oil and commodity prices, in its desire to cover its huge budget deficit.

Despite the country's huge debt, the IMF said in separate talks it didn't think the Philippines would be in need of debt relief. Former Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima, who resigned last July 6 together with nine other administration officials, said seeking debt relief could adversely affect the country's capability to access future loans.

The World Bank earlier discouraged the Philippines from seeking short-term relief, saying it was counterproductive. World Bank country director Joachim von Amsberg also said that the Philippines, unlike African countries, was not yet in a situation where it needed debt relief.

"The Philippines has access to debt markets. The strategy now is how to get the best access. But with African countries, you're talking of countries that have practically no access to markets," Amsberg said.

State firms . . .

PHILC Shipping and Transport Corp. (P1.46 million), National Electrification Administration (P95,000), Philippine Center for Economic Development (P80,000), 1V Real Estate Inc. (P30,000), and Bangkone Realty Corp. (P1,000).

The DOF also reported that last year, unrecovered Swiss chief pushed the highest net income included UBP with P1.6 billion, Land Bank, P1.25 billion, and Philippine Port Authority, P1.06 billion.

Although it has already surpassed its dividend collection target for the year, the DOF still urged asset-owned firms, especially the profitable ones, to further increase their contributions to the government.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said higher dividend collection was one of the DOF's strategies to reinforce compensate the lost potential revenues from the suspension of the expanded value-added tax law.

Another measure cited was the across-the-board one-percentage point increase in import duties, a move seen to generate P34.6 billion in incremental revenues a year. The DOF also said the government would suspend the plans of lowering the old tariff to 5 percent (from the present 7 percent) while the VAT measure is suspended.

Teves said the DOF was hoping the Supreme Court would soon lift the temporary restraining order it imposed on the VAT law, saying that among the available fiscal measures, it had the highest revenue potential.

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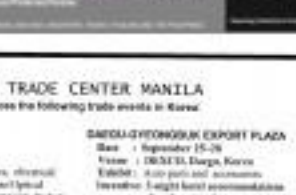

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Canadian firm eyes stake in Platinum Plans

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A CANADIAN dealer of scholarship plans has expressed interest in acquiring a majority stake in embattled Platinum Plans Phils. Inc.

An unnamed source told the business that the Canadian firm was about to conclude a due diligence study of Platinum and was considering tapping SGV & Co. to examine the company's financial condition.

The source said the Canadian firm was looking to buy around 60 percent of Platinum.

Platinum earlier said it planned to restructure itself into a marketing company should its rehabilitation plan prove successful.

In a petition with the Makati Regional Trial Court, Platinum said it planned to distribute products and services of companies outside the pre-need industry, such as credit cards, personal loans, and health-related programs.

Platinum said concessions from its client-base officers should bring in additional funds needed to pay some P900 million in obligations to plan holders.

The pre-need firm was also exploring the possibility of selling non-performing assets, such as idle property. The sale of one piece of property alone was estimated to bring in an estimated P2.2 billion.

Platinum Plans earlier filed for the suspension of payments of its various obligations due to financial difficulties.

Platinum Plans, with over 37,000 plan holders, is the second pre-need firm to ask for court protection this year, following Pacific Plans Inc.

Platinum Plans, majority-owned by the Sidar family headed by former banker Ernesto Sidar, had its license to sell fixed-rate and open-ended education plans suspended this year after it met with liquidity problems. Platinum has a trust fund deficit of more than P700 million.

In its petition, Platinum asked the court to suspend all claims that would be filed against it and its guarantors. It said it could settle only up to 35% million of its maturing obligations to plan holders.

It also asked the court to appoint a rehabilitation receiver.

Platinum said that while it has more than sufficient assets to cover its liabilities, it might not be able to pay for plans as they mature. Chan, was hired to work rehabilitation.

kotra KOREA TRADE CENTER MANILA

announces the following trade events in Korea:

APEC BUSINESS PLAZA 2005
Date : August 29~31
Venue : Busan, Korea
Exhibit : computer, car accessories, electrical electronic items, Mobile phone/Optical products, building/construction materials, Robot, automation systems, home appliances, packaging machines, agricultural food processing mc, beverages machineries equipments, computer software, smart parts, pumps/valves, textiles, etc
Incentives: 4 night hotel accommodations free for attendees

KOREA INTERNATIONAL LIVESTOCK EXPO 2005 (KILSTOCK)
Date : August 31 ~ Sept. 3
Venue : KINTEX, Daejeon, Korea
Exhibit: animal feed/additives, feeding/watering equipment, meat breeder, health/hygiene products, depollution/animal waste treatment, meat/meat processing equipment and etc
Incentives: 2 night hotel accommodations free for attendees.

THE 7TH DAEGU INT'L AUTOMATIC MACHINERY & TOOL EXHIBITION 2005
Date : September 7~10
Venue : EXCO, Daegu, Korea
Exhibit : FA systems, measuring control, robot, and sub processes, IT enterprise, MCAD/CAM/CAE, mechanical working machine, materials handling, environmental facility, refrigeration/air-conditioning
Incentives: 2 night hotel accommodations free for attendees.

ASIA SCIENCE & LABORATORY INSTRUMENT EXHIBITION (ASSILEXNASLAB 2005)
Date : September 7~9
Venue : KOTREX, Daejeon, Korea
Exhibit: all science and laboratory instrument/equipment, optical image analysis/information/material technology,
Incentives: 3 night hotel accommodations free.

DAEGU-GYEONGBUK EXPORT PLAZA
Date : September 15~16
Venue : DEXCO, Daegu, Korea
Exhibit: Auto parts and accessories
Incentives: 1 night hotel accommodations free for attendees

JEONJU COMPUTER GAME EXPO
Date : October 1~3
Venue : Jeonju, Korea
Exhibit: computer games, mobile content, On-Line games, accessories and other related items
Incentives: 2 night hotel accommodations free for attendees.

THE AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY & SEED SHOW (TAMAS 2005)
Date : November 19~18
Venue : KOTREX, Daejeon, Korea
Exhibit : agricultural machineries and equipments, greenhouse equipments, parts, seeds, fertilizers, and etc.
Incentives: 3 night hotel accommodations free for attendees.

KOREA ELECTRONICS SHOW 2005
Date : October 11~15
Venue : KINTEX, Goyang, Korea
Exhibit : Home Entertainment, PC and personal digital audio devices such as PDA, wireless info terminal, Internet terminal, LED, game platform, Network Computing Products such as server, work station, client terminal display, projector, OA equipment, LAN/WAN equi., IP equipment, communication terminal, communication/broadcasting Equipments and terminals, Industrial Electronic Goods, electronic Parts Materials such as semiconductors, displays and other electronic parts and materials

Businessmen who are interested to attend any of the above events should register on or before August 5, 2005
Ph. call 811-1185/891-2244 ext 214/879 | Fax. 817-2369, ask for Ms. Carole or Mr. Aaron for further details.

FURRY exercise machines /C3

LIFESTYLE

Color Chris Bland-Fontivero

Better slow (carbs) but sure

"Eating white pure rice or white bread is just like eating candy as far as your body knows."

—Walter Willett, chair of nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

IT IS to your body's advantage to know the impact of food on your body. Recent discoveries reveal that current and studies have "surprisingly unpredictable effects on blood sugar."

This new thought has caused a revolution in the way carbohydrates are viewed, according to Jean Carper in "The Miracle Fruit."

Fast carbs, slow carbs

Without a doubt, your body needs carbohydrates for energy. And your brain definitely needs a steady supply of glucose. Fast foods that raise your blood sugar levels slowly.

Sometimes, though, the brain needs a jolt to stimulate it to heights of productivity.

The evolutionary diet, or ancient "quick fix," is dates. But, since recommended to diabetics, studies show that dates send blood sugar soaring more quickly than refined sugar, candies or soda colors food.

The best advice is to eat "slow" carbohydrates that are compatible with your health needs. Remember that your body, specifically "your brain, is totally dependent on the status of glucose in your blood." In short, depriving yourself of good carbs due to a diet fad will deprive your brain of its much needed fuel glucose.

Fast carbs are high glycemic, meaning they produce "spikes and valleys" in blood sugar. In contrast, slow carbs that cause a gradual rise in glucose are low glycemic.

Here are more facts about carbohydrates:

Fast carbs impair weight loss, promote obesity and type 2 diabetes, depress good HDL cholesterol levels, lead to insulin resistance and promote high blood pressure.

Low carbs maximize mental hardiness and health, raise good HDL cholesterol levels, prevent heart disease, stroke and diabetes and reverse insulin resistance.

10 ways to steady blood sugar

1. Know that starches (white potatoes, white bread, rice) can raise your blood sugar faster than eating candy. Notice their low glycemic index (GI).

2. Eat legumes generously (beans, lentils, soybeans, peanuts).

3. Combine high GI food with low GI food (example: bread with nut butter) or low GIs (apples, peanuts, popcorn).

4. Eat vegetables and fruits.

5. Limit processed foods like white bread, cookies, crackers, cereals (unless they are whole grain).

6. Add lemon juice or vinegar to your food to lower its glycemic index.

7. Eat small amounts and portions of food.

8. Eat your breakfast. Your blood sugar levels are lowest upon waking up and need replenishing. Take a combo protein-carbohydrate like egg with whole grain bread and not white toast with jam. Old-fashioned oatmeal is better than quick oats.

9. Take alpha lipoic acid. This supplement lowers blood sugar. For diabetics, 300-600 mg daily for non-diabetic individuals, 50-100 mg daily.

10. Take chromium supplements. For diabetics, 1,000 micrograms daily; non-diabetics, 200 micrograms.

Sugar and children

While sweets may be a favorite of kids, know that sugar when used as a regular high-calorie food. Like fruits, deprives the brain of its nutrient elements. Sweet children can be sensitive to sugar. PET (positron emission tomography) scans show that children's brains do not burn glucose as efficiently which can lead to mood swings and hyperactivity. Tests show that children on high-sugar diets perform poorly in academics.

But carbs!

Try to keep your blood glucose at fairly normal levels to ensure good mood and good nutritional function. Choose low glycemic foods over high glycemic foods. Cut back on the sugar.

Sugar as beauty aid

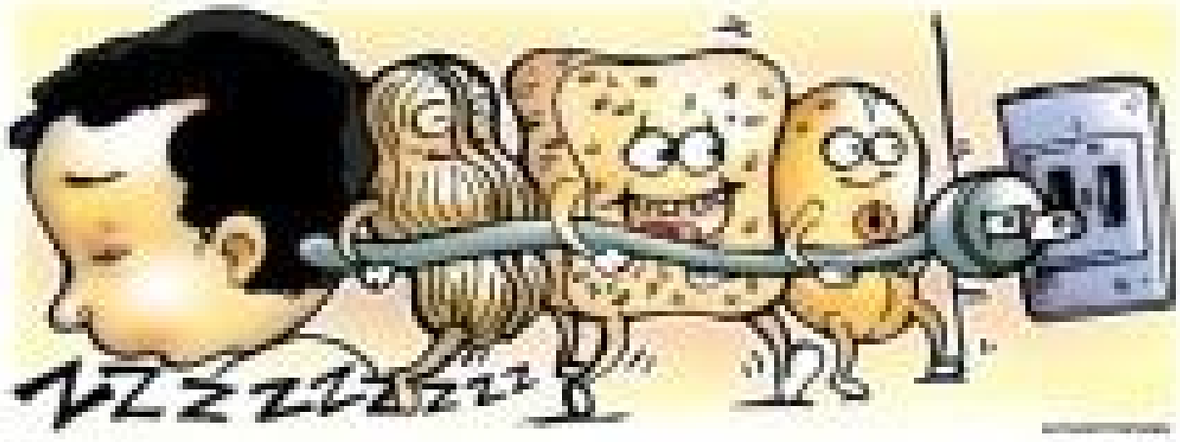
Externally sugar makes for a good body and face scrub. Mix four tablespoons with your favorite oil (virgin coco oil, olive), add a drop of antibacterial oil (tea tree/clove) or squeeze ½ of a lemon or orange. Scrub your body from toe to face. Rinse with a milk wash (1 glass of fresh/canned milk/ if powder, mix as in a drink) and smooth over your skin. Shower after three minutes.

Sweet affirmation:

"I attract only sweetness in my life for I wonder it."

Love and light!

Reference: Jean Carper "The Miracle Fruit"



The body, specifically the brain, is totally dependent on the status of glucose in the blood

CULTE Femme's Hindy Weber-Tanoses and Jon Escario

L'ORÉAL's luxury division GPI Yolip Encarnacion with glam Mia Dragon Feliciano

COVER girl Iza Calzado with newly appointed Marie Claire editor-in-chief Marra Sison

YOUNG, married and happy Alcala and Mannix Ortega

OUR town's hottest twosome: good-looker Richard Gutierrez and gorgeous Georgina Wilson

SISTERS 2: Chris Albert and Ana Kreng

Shu Uemura's eye-catching senior product manager Tessa Dragon, brilliant brand manager Tina Tinio, my expat pal Tim Kip and Preview's enchanting Pauline Suarez Juan

At the Shu Uemura Beauty Lounge: Isha Kristys, Agos Bengson, Barie Carlos and Liz Ly

WELL-DRESSED Cindy Dragon: Lucas

OLGA Asarcon of Mott-ri Chandon that provided all the bubbly and other drinks; southern gent Tom Valderrama of Beam Infinity and Shu Uemura's chief makeup artist Aung Zakaria

L'ORÉAL Phils.' managing director, Eric Charmson David Rosas, with Elle Cocoon's Frances Lim (left) and Anna Whitehead

The essence of beauty and luxury

HARBOR Beluga: of VSBC, one of the sponsors of the affair, with E.J. Union, mega-concert producer and party organizer

EYE-CATCHERS Cecile Bagsic and Victoria Cantalejo

POPULAR couple Jojo Reinoso and husband, entrepreneur Henry Zubiaris

PRETTY Kimi Schuler Cojuangco and Dino Tiburcio Godinez

GANG of three: Sevilleregal Paz Soria with Victoria Tuason and Marne Garcia

CLOSE pair: Cita Bonilla Velour with Chrissy Schulte and her husband, hotelier-realtor Jorge Bermudez

SISTERS: Vivacious Roberta Lopez Feliciano and Barney Dizon's magic mirror Gina Lopez

PRETTY as a picture Tara Lilioan with mom Migs Aurrera

FUN couple Michelle and Jesse Blair of BPM Philippines

NICOLE Sarria and Angelo Limos

NISSAN hotshot Mick Lucas and his wife, Lucille Carlos, with paleggio Johnny Limos

ELUSIVE Hotelier Paulo Pinto will say "I do's" with eye-catcher Ria Francisco.

YES, paleggio. Shu Uemura teamed up with Estate Infinity to introduce a new concept in beauty and sheer luxury.

"Since it was founded in 1964, cosmetic brand Shu Uemura has always believed in beautiful skin, and the way to achieve it is by cleansing with the High Performance Balancing Cleansing Oil," explained Shu Uemura's brilliant spokesgal, Tessa Tinio.

To bring the amazing cleansing oil to the attention of the public in a non-traditional way, Shu Uemura partnered with Smart Infinity in a series of fantastic events involving jewelry bushes, limousine rides and Shu Uemura users.

From a cool cherry blossom afternoon tea product launch at the Terazzo Room, to an Ocean-type chi-chi Beauty Lounge at Fairview Shangrila's fantastic 15th anniversary bash, Shu Uemura and Smart Infinity truly delighted their beauty-conscious guests.

Shu Uemura, celebrated for the first time with SU, a group of young talented Filipino artists, to produce "a complete visual and fashion concept that captured the essence of the Sakura Cleansing Oil Touch" and made it Filipino-in-flavor. The result was astoundingly sensuous, paleggio.

With live DJ sounds from Spin City beauty workers gave guests their fill of Mojito Chundon, Bailey's, Smirnoff and Hennessy cocktails and the calorific no-crummy Adhesion's chocolates covered with cocoa butter, as they got their makeup done by Shu Uemura stylists.

At Smart's Infinity Beauty Lounge, Sail Spa therapists worked their magic on hands.

At the end of the session, invitees received toned beauty-kits from Shu Uemura and souvenir photos of their visit. Definitely a major first in our town's party scene.

Making this lab happening a success were the brains behind the scenes like Shu Uemura's hot, hot business unit manager Tina Tinio; no less, with Shu Uemura's rah-rah team: Tessa Dragon, makeup artist par excellence Aung Zakaria, Agos Mayuga and Elaine Cabero; together with SU's Emilia Bautista, Yvette Quisumbing-Bernabe, Marie Adriza and Jean Cigaleta.

'Children's' party

It's a sad fact, paleggio, that every day hundreds of poor children all over the world are abused and left to wonder the stories. Some of them turn to crime, while a few lucky ones get help and solace from ABS-CBN's Bantay Bata 163 Foundation. This fantastic organization has helped love many children from the evils of domestic abuse and crime on the streets.

When the call came, one of Gotesman Manille's more familiar faces dashed to the Bellevue Hotel in Alabang for a night of spectacular music, gourmet food, good wine and booze. Five hundred invitees rushed the floor to the 6th round of their stupendous bandit, 8 men's, Pilsenaires and the Greg, and The Spirit of '67.

Sponsors were, as always, the kindhearted ones who help without having an eyelash. Smart Infinity, Bepsi, SMDC The Heritage Park, Rockwell Land Corporation, RSBC, Bantay's financiers, our very own Philippine Daily Inquirer, watch!. Jun Miguel Light, and the popular Pedrosa's & Silverstein, which donated a special raffle prize. They all pitched in to make the night a success.

Host Electrocute provided the lights and sounds that amazed the crowd and created a demand for encores.

Watching the crowd having a blast was a sight that this happening, superbly put together by the unmistakable party organizers and concert producers, real people E.J. Union and his multitalented wife, pastry princess Tess Agcaoili, no less, paleggio, was a major success.

Well, people if you missed this fab evening of great sounds, stay cool! There's more to come!

Sporting 'eye

First, it was raining cats and dogs. Next it was raining men, then it was raining big boys!

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Rogers
Setting: Rodolfo Estig Wilson

soon, as in ouch, and now it seems it's raining babies, would you believe?

There I was shopping for veggies at the popular Price Smart in The Fort, when first I bumped into the gorgeous Dawn Zulueta, all puffed up and super happy-cute! Her imminent arrival of their first boy! "I've waited so long for this, and you can't imagine how fantastic Artem (her husband, wife business-man Artem Lagdameo) and I feel," she told me with her beautiful big smile. Before I could ban an eyelash, in came paging my NB, Dawn she was, still super beatific! Eye Galaxyone Lagdameo, who is close to the big day. She didn't gain the pounds most women get when they are at the last trimester of pregnancy, nice or not?

Then kind whispers blew my way from three of our county's most sought-after eligible guys, who are absorbed in some that merry stage of being mamas. They are happily in love with the respective papas to be, who are ecstatic over the coming of their baby. But no plans of marriage... at least for now. Who knows? I have a feeling that long-time couple who finally said their "I do's" with their kids as part of the wedding entourage recently when their cute toddlers are able to walk and they usually steal the show from their parents.

And surprise, surprise! Guess who's saying their "I do's"? Well, paleggio, it's none other than one of the country's most eligible and charm bachelors, popular Paulo Rufino Pinto, no less, Ing's cyber smart director, so pretty as a picture, eye-catcher Ria Francisco, beauty editor of Candy magazine. This whirlwind romance even caught me with my pants down (pardon the expression), paleggio.

But it seems when Paulo saw her for the first time, he said, "This is it!" Wal-

ding is set for sometime in September. Well, there goes another well-loved bachelor for "L" life.

And, last Saturday, at the swinging Palm, where everyone who is anyone can be spotted, the Francisco's daughter, brilliant, well-respected Ladi Arroyo was there chilling. "With whom?" I asked her. She smiled and said some friends and a cousin.

"Oh, kissing cousins," I joked. "No Maurice, a real cousin," she said, laughing.

This is one Miss who definitely has an incredibly smart head on her shoulders.

Exercise machines with fur

WELL AND GOOD

Tess Jones

THE LIGHTS! love of my daughter's life (no offense to her boyfriend) is a black-and-white bundle of energy and affection called Lucy.

My daughter calls the one-and-a-half-year-old Boston terrier "incubus with fur."

Lucy brought so much happiness to us that my daughter got an identical RT, a girl named Lilly, while my husband and I got a dog-sucky boy called Freddy.

Irresistible

Why do dogs (and other pets) make us feel so good? Is it because they are always happy to see you and never answer back? How can you resist a dog that nuzzles early to please and follows you around?

A pet therapy article in Holistic Online even has several theories on the stress-relieving benefits of pets:

- While our interactions with people may be quite complex and unpredictable, animals provide a consistent source of comfort.
- Animals bring out our nurturing instincts because we feel needed and responsible.
- Pets make us feel safe and unconditionally accepted.
- Pet ownership may affect people physiologically through the soothing and calming effect of touch.
- Spontaneous communication with a pet or simply watching a cat or fish may produce a relaxation response and may be an antidote to a bad mood or stressful day.

Health benefits

Research found that, though dogs were not the only ones that made people feel good, they were the most expressive.

- You don't have to save a pet to enjoy the health benefits. Oral surgery patients who watched a tank of fish before surgery were more relaxed and went home when they did not.
- Petting a dog can temporarily lower blood pressure and increase levels of serotonin, oxytocin, and prolactin...feel-good chemicals and hormones.
- A study at the University of California, Los Angeles found that dog owners needed less medical care for stress-related conditions than non-dog owners.
- Another study found that having a pet increased the survival rate of heart attack victims more than the support of a spouse or friends.

But only people who enjoy having a pet reap health benefits. Those who don't like animals find their company stressful. The wrong kind of pet also causes more stress.

Overweight pets

Chubby dogs may look cute but they are not healthy. The National Academy of Sciences says, "An overweight dog is more likely to have arthritis, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, respiratory problems, pancreatitis, weakened immunity, exercise intolerance and surgical complications, and a shortened life."

But many owners don't realize their dogs have a weight problem. In a study of 200 dogs, 80 percent were found to be obese, yet 72 percent of owners felt their pets had the right weight or were underweight.

"How do you tell a dog is fat? Veterinary nutrition expert Rebecca Remillard said the best way was to compare a dog's shape with pictures of dogs of ideal weight. A slim dog, every of ribs is felt, should have a visible "waist." Worse, can your hand cover the dog's ribs. If there's covered with a slight excess of fat and not easily felt, the dog is likely overweight. If the ribs are difficult or impossible to feel through the fat, it is likely obese."

Dogs and people become overweight for basically the same reasons: too much food and not enough exercise.

A tired dog is a good dog.

Regular exercise won't just help a dog to be trim and healthy but also make him/her behaved. In "Pet Revolution," professional animal trainers Warren and Pat Johnson write, "Nearly every behavioral problem we have encountered... is directly attributable or lack of exercise."

The Johnsons say exercise can cure such problems as furniture chewing, biting, car chasing, hole digging and excessive barking.

Dr. Robin Tripp, author of "Pet Prescription Management," recommends a minimum of walking one city block per 10 pounds of body weight daily. So a 60-pound dog needs to walk at least six blocks every day. Another formula is 20-30 minutes of exercise four to five times a week.

Furry machines

The American Council on Exercise (ACE) calls dogs "exercise machines with fur." Dogs can help you get fit if you exercise with them. Taking a dog for a daily afternoon walk can help an overweight youngster or teenager lose weight without feeling that exercise is punishment.

Aside from walking with your dog, you can also take him for a walk or run while you ride a bike or roller skate. Remember that dogs, especially those with long hair and/or short snouts, overheat easily (exercise in the early morning or late afternoon). Give enough water before, during and after workout.

You can learn a lot from dogs.

They are just like people when it comes to losing weight. Both have to drop excess pounds slowly and safely. Nutrition authority Joan Carper recommends cutting doggie calories by 25 percent if your pet is overweight. She cites research showing dogs do less when they lose only slightly more than one percent of body weight a week, about three to four ounces for a 20-pound dog.

If your dog is obese (weighs more than 20 percent of normal), a veterinarian may prescribe weight-loss foods. Carper advises owners to be patient. No crash diets or instant weight loss. She says it can take 12 months for an obese dog to regain a normal figure safely.

My daughter says dogs are also make us better people. Her sarcasm is her blog (www.sarcasmx.blogspot.com). "They forgive easily. They are loyal...they take each day as it comes, they love sex with all their being and, if it's in fish, they just look cute."

Note: Paul de Leon of Promised Land Kennels Inc. (09175029940) is one of the best breeders of Boston terriers.

Visit www.tessjonesfitness.info

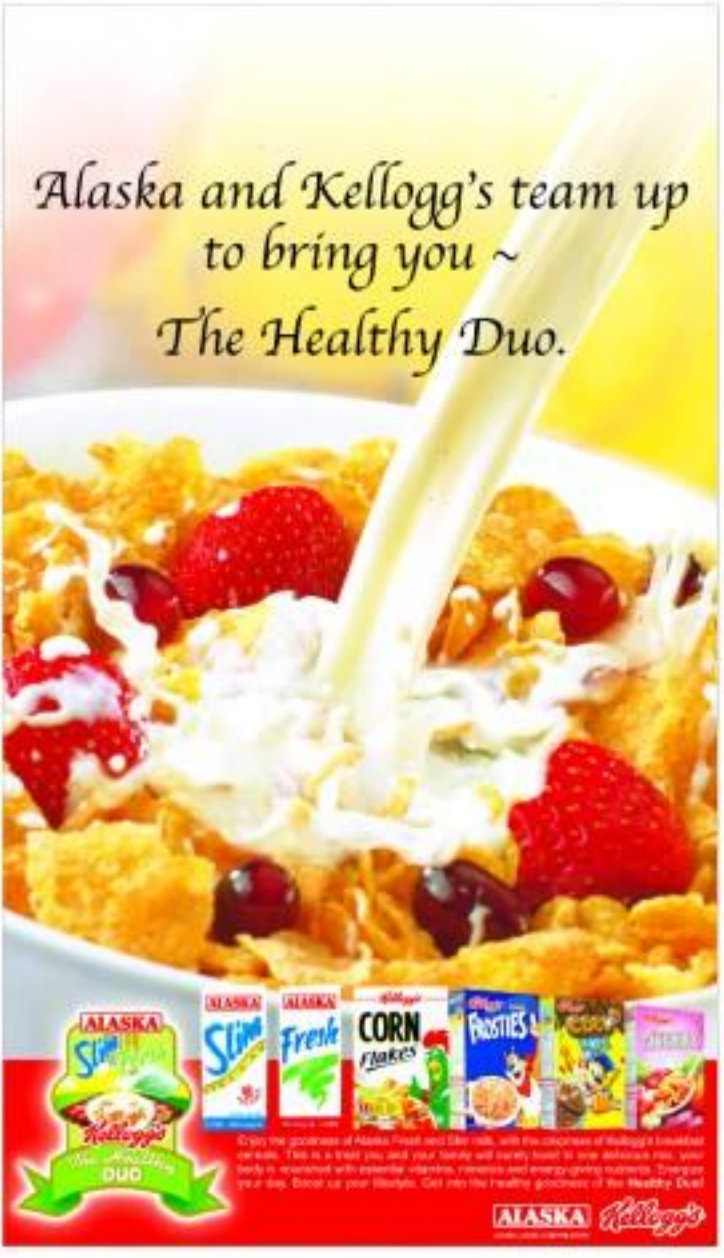
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Ab crunch on mini ball

THIS exercise flexes and strengthens abdominal muscles.

Equipment:
Exercise mat and small rubber ball

Exercise technique:
1. Place the mini ball behind your head, not under your head.
2. Legs should be hip distance apart with hands behind your head.
3. Pull your chest towards the floor and lift your pelvis as you curl your torso up.
4. Slowly return to the starting position.
5. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:
1. Exhale as you curl; inhale on the return.
2. Avoid dropping your hands behind your head so you don't pull on your neck.

Repetitions:
10 repetitions.